

RON PAUL'S FUTURE ■ JOHN W. MCCAIN ■ CONSCIENCE OF A CARNIVORE

APRIL 21, 2008

# The American Conservative



## SUPERPOWER

China's Olympian Quest

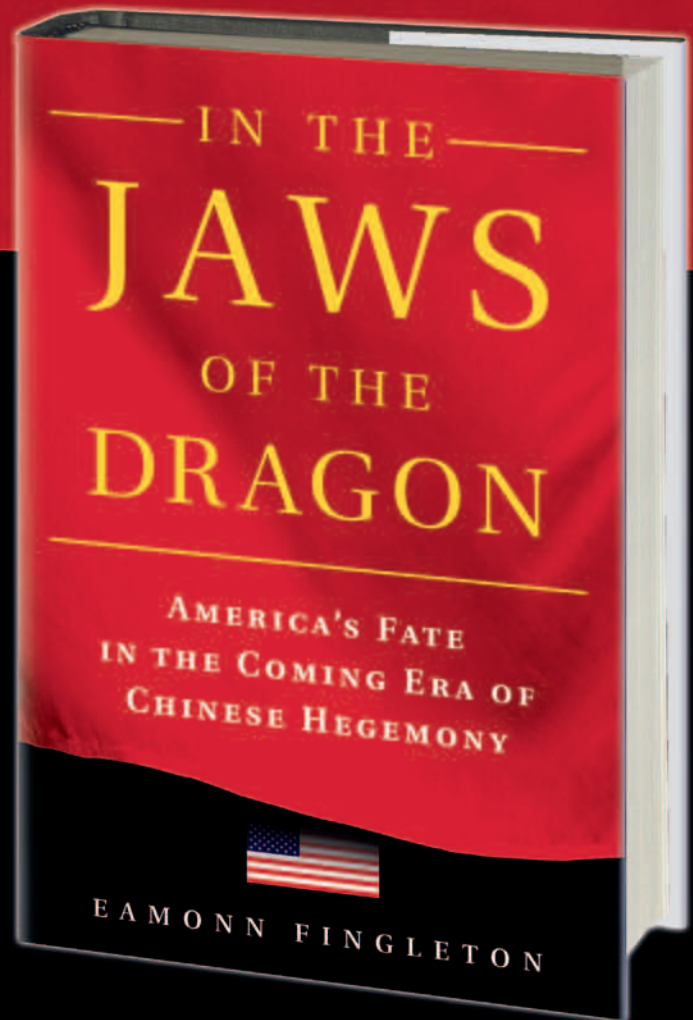
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# ★ THE CHINESE ★ ARE EATING ★ OUR LUNCH!

Scholar and economist Eamonn Fingleton sounds a wake-up call to those who dream that through free-market capitalism, China will embrace American values and welcome U.S. firms.

**F**ingleton shows that, despite “world-is-flat” promises, China will remain protectionist. The U.S., seeking access to Chinese markets, is already bowing to Beijing’s will and is becoming more like China—authoritarian, with growing gaps between rich and poor—but without our competitor’s combination of discipline and market efficiencies.

Fingleton prescribes practical remedies to help Uncle Sam extricate his coattails from the jaws of the dragon. This is a must read for anyone concerned with globalization or the future of America’s economy.



**“Fingleton is an expert on how globalization is helping China . . . hollow out the American economy. No one has observed globalization more keenly and no one writes about it more readably.”**

—Ernest F. “Fritz” Hollings, Chairman,  
Senate Commerce Committee, 2001–2004

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[WAR]

## LOCKED DOWN, LOCKED IN

While Gen. David Petraeus was in Washington playing for time, Baghdad was hunkered down. Five years after the statue of Saddam toppled in Firdos Square, the capital is under vehicle curfew, markets are closed, streets deserted. Even the Green Zone, America's fortified command center, is under fire: on April 6, rockets killed two Americans and wounded 17 others.

Embassy staffers have been told to remain under "hardened cover" as shelling by Moqtada al-Sadr's militia continues. They've traded their individual accommodations for cots in the reinforced structures. A "warden message" advised, "until further notice, all personnel under the authority of the Chief of Mission are required to wear body armor, helmet and protective eyewear anytime they are outside of building structures in the International Zone." This is the most secured place in the country.

News organizations estimated attacks throughout Iraq at 435 last week. This follows an outbreak of violence in late March after Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered an offensive against Sadr's Mahdi Army in Basra and the Baghdad slum dubbed Sadr City. The *Washington Post* captured the scene: "Four US Stryker armored vehicles were seen in Sadr City ... one of them engaging Mahdi Army militiamen with heavy fire. The din of American weapons, along with the Mahdi Army's AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades, was heard through much of the day. US helicopters and drones buzzed overhead." Hundreds were killed—women and children among them. A tenuous ceasefire stanching the bloodletting but promises no stability between secular and fundamentalist Shia.

Sunnis are also divided. In a bid to hang on to power, Sunni politicians, col-



luding with Maliki's parliamentary bloc, are threatening to bar parties with militias—not just Sadr but the U.S.-backed Sunni Sons of Iraq—from provincial elections this fall. Prospects for power sharing, much less democracy, look increasingly grim.

So do America's odds of extricating itself anytime soon. Arnaud de Borchgrave reports that in a private Oval Office meeting a year ago, a European author asked Bush, "What about your successor?" The president replied, "Don't worry about him. We'll fix it so he'll be locked in."

Mission accomplished.

[CHINA]

## DIPLOMATIC GAMES

In the latest display of self-congratulatory preening that sometimes passes for liberal strategy, Hillary Clinton has asked President Bush to boycott the Beijing Olympics' opening ceremonies. She is not the lone entrant in the moral-posturing-as-foreign-policy sweepstakes. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has also urged Bush to consider staying away, and several European leaders are on the boycott path.

The cause is Chinese suppression of Tibet, an ugly affair that has gone on since 1950. But for those who trade in symbolic virtue politics, any excuse for protest will do. There is China's

involvement in Darfur; last year it was its support of the Burmese junta.

But what impact do such displays have on the situation they are designed to help? Let's be clear: a snub by Bush, or a full-fledged Olympic boycott, would be perceived as a huge affront to the Chinese leadership. As one China expert put it, it would be "insulting the Chinese directly on an issue of face." But what benefit would this have for Tibet?

Another consideration is how high the matter ranks on the range of issues America has with China. Take three: nuclear proliferation, trade, and global warming. All are more important to American well-being than changes in Tibet's situation. (Reality check: the United States is no more prepared to do anything about Tibet than it did in 1950.)

China was a dictatorship seven years ago when it was awarded the 2008 Games and remains one now. It is also a rapidly growing and changing society—evolving in directions no one can predict with certainty. The course it takes may be influenced by insulting its leaders, but it's hard to see how the outcome could be positive.

[ALLIES]

## GEORGIA ON MY MIND

The Bush administration's designs for Eastern Europe were rebuffed at the NATO summit in Bucharest—and not a

moment too soon. Despite a promise by George H.W. Bush that NATO would not expand eastward, both Bill Clinton and Bush II have extended the alliance to the Balkans and the Baltic states. In Bucharest, administration officials asked that Georgia and Ukraine be invited into the security partnership. That offer was scuttled by Germany, France, and Italy, much to the embarrassment of the United States but also for its own good.

NATO's current value to the U.S. is marginal. This latest summit saw France contributing just 700 new soldiers to fight in Afghanistan. Other European nations managed to lend 18 helicopters. Now the Bush administration wants to align the U.S. so closely with two former Soviet republics that an attack on Kiev will be considered an attack on Kansas. Why?

Georgia's civil war is unresolved, and a majority of Ukraine's people oppose NATO membership—just as they opposed the Washington-sponsored “Orange Revolution.” NATO was formed by strong nations for common defense in the Cold War against the expansionist Soviet Union. The only reason Washington would be anxious to extend membership to basket-case countries is to intimidate Russia and promote the ideology of global democracy.

In the last century, another superpower let its dreams of captaining a worldwide revolution saddle it with unmanageable client states. Let's hope our traditional allies will continue to keep us from making the same mistake.

[ELECTION]

## RAISING THE BARR?

Bob Barr, the former Republican congressman from Georgia—and occasional *TAC* contributor—is exploring a run for the Libertarian Party's presidential nomination. We welcome him

to the race: Barr not only brings an additional antiwar voice to the 2008 contest, he continues to be—some-what surprisingly for a Libertarian—a strong proponent of border control. His immigration stance is, politically speaking, a double-edged sword. It gives him a chance to win restrictionist votes from John McCain. But it may complicate his efforts to win the LP's nomination.

Libertarian purists may also grumble at Barr's socially conservative record in his eight years in Congress. He sponsored the Defense of Marriage Act and opposed abortion.

Congressman Barr was gerrymandered to defeat by his own party in 2002. Since then, he has won considerable respect as a civil-liberties coalition builder, bringing together the liberal and conservative organizations concerned about erosions of privacy. (He voted for the PATRIOT Act after 9/11, but has expressed regret ever since.)

The odds of any Libertarian making it to the White House are negligible, of course. But Barr's candidacy may get out the important message that much of the Right rejects the militarism and statism of John McCain. If he can win the LP nomination, he can be counted upon to enliven the November contest. We look forward to covering him.

[TAC]

## NEW KIDS ON THE BLOG

Want more *TAC*? Visit us online where two new blogs offer a lively mix of news, views, and razor-sharp commentary. On our group blog—@TAC ([www.amconmag.com/blog](http://www.amconmag.com/blog))—*TAC* writers and editors continue the conversation started in these pages. And Daniel Larison has moved his blog, *Eunomia*, well known among political junkies for its quality and bite, to *TAC*'s website ([www.amconmag.com/larison](http://www.amconmag.com/larison)). Drop by and let us know what you think. ■

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[enter the dragon]

# Superpower Play

China wants to announce its hegemonic ambitions with Olympic victory—but may fall short of the gold.

By Luke Coppen

DESPITE THE COMBINED efforts of Steven Spielberg, the Dalai Lama, Muslim separatists, Western human-rights campaigners, and green activists, the Beijing Olympics are going to happen. At 08:08:08 on Aug. 8, 2008, China's Communist top brass will be crammed into Beijing's "bird's nest" stadium for the start of the Games. Don't be surprised to see them glancing anxiously at the sky. Their greatest fear is that at that moment—one of the most auspicious in modern Chinese history—the heavens will open and wash out the opening ceremony.

Meteorologists say there is a 50 percent chance of a downpour over the \$440-million open-air stadium. To reduce the risk, officials have poured money into "cloud seeding," a process whereby thousands of silver iodate pellets are blasted into threatening clouds days before the Games begin in order to induce rain. This (far from reliable) "weather modification" project shows just how determined China is to ensure that the Games of the XXIX Olympiad are a success.

But aside from keeping Hu Jintao, the country's paramount leader, dry during the opening celebrations, how will China measure success? In public, Chinese politicians blabber about bringing the world's nations together through sport, promoting respect, harmony, and friendship. Forget about that. For China,

success means one thing: knocking the United States off the top of the medal stand. The 2008 Olympics is not merely a sporting event. It is, as sportswriter Tim Noonan put it, "the coming out party of the Chinese empire," a chance for China to put the world on notice of its coming supremacy in global affairs.

Don't imagine that the humiliations of the past few months have dimmed China's dreams of Olympic glory. First, there were the boycott calls. Then in February, Spielberg resigned as Olympic artistic adviser over China's complicity in Darfur. This was followed in March by the bloody Tibetan uprising, unrest in the Muslim-majority region of Xinjiang, and the disruption of the Olympic torch-lighting ceremony in Athens. That quivering flame is still making its perilous journey across Europe, America, India, and Tibet before arriving in Beijing on Aug. 6. Protesters might not realize, however, that these setbacks only sharpen China's desire to silence critics with a crushing victory at the Games.

Until recently, the idea of China winning an Olympics was laughable. Before the Communists took power in 1949, Chinese athletes took part in three Olympics and won nothing. When Mao Zedong unleashed the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the Party banned competitive sports. Top-flight sportsmen were denounced publicly for *jinqbiao zhuyi*,

or "trophy mania." Ping pong champion Rong Guotuan was held on a false spying charge and hanged himself in jail. China remained in sporting isolation until the end of the 1970s, when Deng Xiaoping decided to promote not only economic but also athletic competition. China finally returned to the Games in 1980 at the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. The country had to wait until 1984 for its first gold. Yet only 20 years later, at the 2004 Games in Athens, it came second only to the United States.

How did China reverse its sporting fortunes so dramatically? The driving engine was politics, more specifically nationalism, which, rather than Communism, is the regime's defining ideology. The Beijing Games offer the Communist Party an unrivalled opportunity to boost its legitimacy by achieving a unifying, morale-boosting victory in the world's greatest sporting competition.

After Beijing was awarded the Games in 2001, Communist officials developed their own case of "trophy mania." They swiftly conceived the "119 Project," a campaign to top the Summer Games' medal stand in 2008. The project focuses on three major event categories: track and field, swimming, and other water sports. The apparently random figure of 119 was in fact precisely calculated: it marked the number of medals needed in these events to take China to Olympic



victory. The three disciplines, which comprise roughly a third of the competition, have never been among China's strongest. Can you name a Chinese sprinter? I didn't think so.

Determined to move China far beyond its traditional areas of dominance—badminton, table tennis, and gymnastics—officials looked at the figures. China has 1.25 billion people, a fifth of the planet's population. Somewhere among them there must be a potentially world-class canoeist, marathon runner, and freestyle swimmer. How do you find them? Go around to schools with a measuring tape and pack off any child with the appropriate dimensions—sometimes determined with the help of X-rays—for intensive sports training.

This was the system that discovered Yao Ming, the tallest player in the NBA and a regular starter in the annual All-Star Game. The Houston Rockets center was born in Shanghai in 1980 to two retired basketball players who were then the tallest couple in China. City officials had encouraged Yao's parents to get married in the hope that they would produce a sporting giant. They were not disappointed: Yao was nearly double the size of the average Chinese newborn. When he was 13, and already over 6'5", he moved out of home and into the Shanghai Sports Technology Institute. For the next eight years, his parents hardly saw him as he was moulded into the basketball superstar in the size 18 sneakers that we know today. Despite injuring his foot this season, Yao is expected to play for China at the Olympics.

Liu Xiang, a slim 24-year-old with a boyish face, is another outstanding product of the system. The only child of a truck driver and a waitress, in the fourth grade Liu was selected and placed in a sports school, where he excelled at high jump. At 15, he met a hurdle coach who persuaded him to switch events. In 2004,

he won gold at Athens in the 110m hurdles, with a world-record-equalling time of 12.91 seconds. "I believe I achieved a modest miracle for the yellow-skinned Chinese people and the Asian people," he said afterwards. His politically incorrect observation highlighted a point that is often glossed over: China's push for medals has a distinct racial undertone, as if the country were determined to prove that the "yellow-skinned" man is the physical equal of his black and white rivals.

Officials are aware, of course, that the tape measure is a crude guide to future athletic prowess. One of China's top gold-medal prospects, the boxer Zou Shiming, was at first rejected because coaches were only interested in children whose wingspan exceeded their stature by three centimeters. Zou's outstretched arms were a good centimeter less than his height when he was a boy. But Liang Feng, a boxing trainer, saw Zou in the gym and was impressed by his footwork and uncommon willingness to absorb pain. Liang recommended him for the provincial team, fully aware that Zou did not measure up. "If I didn't hide that, it would be over," the coach recalled in a recent *New Yorker* profile. Today, Zou is the world's leading amateur light flyweight. His nicknames—the Fox, the Pirate, the Knight of Lightning—testify to his ability to tag opponents while leaving them swatting thin air.

Although China is famous for the Boxer Rebellion, it has no native boxing tradition. The sport flourished briefly in the port cities of Shanghai and Guangzhou in the 1920s, when it was known as "western boxing." The prizefighters were often foreign sailors taking on local toughs. In 1953, a boxer died after a bout in a competition in the northern city of Tianjin, and the Communist authorities banned the sport from China's first national games in 1959. According to Fan Hong, an expert on Chinese sporting history, "people

believed that boxing was very brutal, very ruthless, and those were said to be the characteristics of capitalism."

Interestingly, when the authorities dropped their opposition to the brutal and ruthless realities of capitalism, boxing flourished again. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping launched sweeping market-oriented reforms and a year later received Muhammad Ali, a goodwill ambassador for boxing, at his heavily fortified compound. Chinese boxers returned to the ring in the 1980s, but at international amateur tournaments were regarded as little more than punching bags in red vests. That is, before Zou donned the national colors.

Zou became the first Chinese boxer to win an Olympic medal in 2004, when he took bronze. Four years later, he will accept nothing less than gold. His preparations are testing his fabled resistance to pain. Recently he wrote on his blog: "Often, when I sleep, my legs don't know where to go. No matter how I lie, I can't sleep comfortably. Worst of all, in a flash, the whistle blows and it's time to get out of bed again to train." He suffers agonizing foot and back pain, but there is no time for surgery before the Olympics. "After endurance runs, I lie on the ground, and I can't tell the tears from the sweat," he told one reporter poetically. But this private vulnerability was nowhere to be seen at last year's AIBA World Championships in Chicago. Zou won with ease, and most observers think he has China's first Olympic boxing gold in the bag.

Like Zou, China's Olympic team as a whole projects an aura of invincibility that intimidates rivals. The official Chinese news agency, Xinhua, captured the national mood when it ran a story last Christmas that began, "China is widely expected to beat the United States and Russia to top the medal standings of the 2008 Olympic Games," before reeling off a long list of gold-medal prospects. The British Olympic Association has

predicted that China will win in Beijing with 48 golds (16 more than in Athens), followed by the United States with 37 and Russia with 32. Last year, Jim Scherr, chief executive of the U.S. Olympic Committee, appeared to agree with that assessment. "It's no secret that we're underdogs," he said. "They're blowing us out of the water in the gold medal race."

When China's main Olympic opponents look back to Athens, they feel a twinge of fear. At the 2004 Games, the average age of Chinese athletes was a strikingly low 23.3. In other words, China decided to drop seasoned athletes in favor of younger competitors who gained valuable Olympic experience in Greece but are destined to reach their peak in Beijing. Add to this the fact that in Athens, China played to its traditional strengths: 21 of its 32 golds came in badminton, diving, shooting, table tennis, and weightlifting. If the 119 Project succeeds in Beijing, China can expect to add to this haul a clutch of golds on the track and in the pool.

And yet curiously, as China's rivals prepare mentally for defeat, confidence is waning among the very officials who designed China's pitch for Olympic supremacy. Cui Dalin, China's deputy minister of sport and vice chairman of the Chinese Olympic Committee, recently hinted that the 119 Project might not fulfill expectations. "We have been backward in these sports for a long time, and our training methods and levels are undeveloped," Cui said. "We have put in the effort but have not made big improvements. Another problem is that we have already bought out full potential in such advantageous events as diving, table tennis, badminton, gymnastics, shooting and weightlifting in Athens. There is little room to improve on the results in Beijing."

Perhaps Cui was simply trying to manage his countrymen's soaring expectations. Yet China does have cause for

concern. The British Olympic Association's projection of 48 golds in Beijing was based on results from international competitions in 2006. But in 2007, China's performance in the 119 Project events took a nosedive. At the World Championships in Athletics in Osaka, China won just one gold (Liu Xiang in the hurdles), leaving it tied for 11th place overall with Cuba and Belarus. And at the World Aquatics Championships in Melbourne, China recorded its worst performance in 15 years: it won just 16 medals, while the U.S. took 40. If China's athletes perform no better in August, the host country faces humiliation.

In the build-up to Beijing, Chinese officials seem to have underestimated America's enduring strength in Olympic competition. The U.S. has dominated the modern Games: since 1896, it has won 2,194 medals—more than double the total of its closest rival, Russia. Moreover, America is bringing its biggest Olympic team ever to this year's Games. And yet many in U.S. Olympic circles are convinced that their adversary is hoarding a secret weapon. Jill Geer, director of communications at USA Track & Field, recently struck an ominous note. "The world needs to be prepared for China to come out with athletes we've never seen before, with performances that we've not seen before," she said. In other words, somewhere in the vastness of China there may be a training camp where drug-enhanced monstrosities run the 100m in under nine seconds and throw the javelin clean out of the stadium.

There have long been suspicions that China, in common with the former Communist sporting powers of the Soviet Union and the GDR, runs a huge covert doping operation. In the 1990s, this was almost certainly true. Numerous leading Chinese athletes were thrown out of international competitions after failing drug tests. As recently as 2005, the world

half-marathon champion, Sun Yingjie, tested positive for the testosterone derivative androsterone and received a two-year ban. But with the Beijing Olympics on the horizon, the government launched a massive crackdown on doping. In 2006, Chinese authorities raided a sports school in northeastern China. According to Xinhua, "Officials caught school staff injecting teenage students with banned substances and confiscated illegal drugs including erythropoietin (EPO) and testosterone." School staff faced criminal charges under a draconian new anti-doping code.

Another theory is that China forced its athletes to put the brakes on in international competition in 2007 to lull the U.S. into a false sense of security. So when Cui Dalin publicly doubted China's chances, he wasn't being frank but devilishly cunning. This suggestion has the typical disadvantage of conspiracy theories: there is no proof. Common sense suggests that ultra-competitive elite athletes are unlikely to hold back on the world stage.

The simplest explanation is that China has drastically overestimated its chances of winning the 2008 Olympics. Having spent most of the new millennium talking up the country's chances, the authorities are starting to play them down. But it's too late. The Chinese public expects nothing less than victory, and if the host nation fails to top the medal count, China's aspirations to international hegemony will take a big hit.

Over the past 25 years, China has achieved the most dramatic sporting transformation of any nation in history. It has gone from Olympic minnow to whale shark. But the evidence suggests it has still not done enough to defeat the world's only sporting superpower.

It may yet rain on China's parade. ■

*Luke Coppen is editor of London's Catholic Herald.*



# Trailing Hillary

Betting it all on the Keystone State

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

PENNSYLVANIA MAY BE the last state to matter in the long and wild Democratic primary race. If Hillary Clinton maintains her early lead, she will close Barack Obama's advantage in the popular vote, and her campaign will be equipped with the argument that she is winning crucial general-election swing states. If Obama defeats her, he will have an insurmountable lead in delegates and votes. He will put to rest the doubts about his ability to win Rust Belt states and the general election.

Demographically, the state should favor Clinton. The primary will be closed to independents and Republican crossovers who have broken for Obama in earlier contests. And Pennsylvania is full of the middle-aged, working-class voters that have been moving to Clinton. There are some 830,000 union workers in the Keystone State. Pennsylvania also has a slightly larger white population and smaller black population than Ohio, where Clinton beat the surging Obama by 10 percent.

The political climate favors Clinton as well. In Ohio, she won over 55 percent of voters worried about their financial situation. Pennsylvanians rate the slowing economy higher than any other concern.

The state has an unemployment rate of 4.9 percent, which has kept pace with the national rate. But recent news has residents concerned: Pennsylvania lost 8,000 jobs in February. Gov. Ed Rendell's office called it, "the first sign that the national economic slowdown might affect Pennsylvania." The northeast

region around Scranton has an unemployment rate of 5.7 percent and climbing. Those losses are concentrated in trade, transportation, and utilities; offsetting job gains are in the state-funded education sector. The *Pittsburgh Tribune* reports that demand for food stamps has spiked by 4.4 percent in the past year.

Pennsylvania's difficult electoral terrain has not changed Obama's approach to campaigning. In Ohio, he posed as a populist critic of NAFTA. But he failed to convince voters so has returned to the rock-star appeal that worked for him throughout the primary season. As part of his recent "Tour for Change," he held a rally at Muhlenberg College in Allentown. He told an audience in the gymnasium, "I'm not running to fit into the Washington mold, I'm running to break the mold." What would sound like egomaniacal bombast from any other candidate sounded natural from him.

Obama has been called out for stealing lines from his friends like Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick ("I have a dream. Just words?"). But he filches rhetoric from opponents as well. Like John Edwards, he says, "We're not taking money from lobbyists. We want to be accountable to you!" Like Mike Huckabee, Obama believes, "We need a health-care system, not a disease care system" and claims, "I believe in free trade, but it has to be fair."

But Obama has introduced some new lines for Pennsylvania voters: "We don't need to raise the minimum wage every

ten years, we need it to rise with inflation. If you work in this country you should not be poor." He empathized with his audience, nodding in the Oprah style while explaining the credit and foreclosure crisis: "Even good businesses and people who had taken out proper and good mortgage loans are getting hurt. What's wrong with this picture? Everything."

On the other side of the state, Obama's wife tried to enhance her husband's image as a national healer and relate to voters more personally. She asked an audience at Carnegie Mellon to imagine "a leader who can touch our souls in a way we haven't felt in a while because our souls are broken." Moments later, she tried to bring him back down to earth: "I don't care how many news covers we're on," she said, "deep down inside we are working class kids." Of her childhood, she said, "When I look at the life I lived growing up, that life is no longer possible. My father was a blue-collar city worker in Chicago. What my father was able to do on the simple city salary was raise a family of four. My mother could stay at home because she could send those kids to a public school and they would get a good education." A campaign that until recently promised "transcendence" was finally talking about jobs and education, as good Democratic campaigns always do.

Mrs. Obama went further, sharing something about her family that would have embarrassed many others. "Just a

few years ago...we were in debt," she said. The only reason they have any money is because "so many of you went out and bought those books he wrote. Thank you!" She continued, "Imagine a president of the United States just a few years out of paying student loans. We have never seen that before." Indeed. An older ethic might have taken this as a sign that the Obamas are unestablished, maybe unstable. But in a confessional age, one in which debtors appear on talk shows to discuss their problems, this may be the personal touch that the Obama campaign has often lacked.

By contrast to Obama's emotional rallies, Hillary Clinton spoke to much smaller organized labor groups on her latest tour of the state. She has already captured a large block of the state's organized labor endorsements, including the powerful American Federation of Teachers and the International Association of Machinists. In her bid to be the candidate offering "solutions not just speeches," she has turned into a labor-policy wonk, citing troubling economic statistics whenever she can.

Clinton convened a Jobs Summit at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers training facility in Pittsburgh. Professors from the University of Pittsburgh joined the mayor to discuss collaboration between the academy, local business leaders, and government to create new technologies. Clinton sat

in between these eminences and explained that the global economy was good, but that it was "essential for America to win the race." She told the audience that the stigma of industrial work had to be lifted: "There is a very false impression about the significance of these jobs. Most of our young people will not go to college and graduate. We need to figure out what can we do to raise respect for these jobs."

One of the panelists, David Malone, the chairman of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, used his moment in the spotlight to push Clinton to commit to more federal largesse and less accountability: "What we would ask the federal government to reconsider is that—while they do provide significant funding—we would ask that there aren't so many strings attached." Clinton sighed unintentionally, looking tired. She quickly acknowledged his concern about burdensome oversight and moved on to her true passion for Pittsburgh: environmentalism.

"Green-collar jobs are the future," Clinton said. In campaign stops around the country, both Hillary and her husband have touted eco-conscious industry. "You can't outsource the job of greening a roof" has become a go-to line for both of them. But other than planting grass and installing solar panels on the nation's McMansions, Clinton is rarely able to describe what these jobs will look like. She hints that Steel City's past industrialism, which polluted the Three Rivers, is a little shameful. According to Clinton the future will see Pittsburgh cleaning up not only southwest Pennsylvania but "leading the world in sustainable technologies." The men in painters-union t-shirts nodded gravely at these words. No one could object to a future that is wealthy and clean.

The transformation of Hillary Clinton from the leader of the "wine-track" Democrats in the '90s, to the white

working-class candidate of 2008 is startling. The globalization that her husband promoted was supposed to transform these voters into computer technicians and white-collar progressives. In 1994, the Clintons sided with environmentalists against logging workers to save the spotted owl. But now the senator from New York believes that industrial workers can become highly paid environmentalists.

Unfortunately, the prospects for both these workers and for the Clinton campaign are grim. Her lead in Pennsylvania, once projected at 17 points, is now into single digits. Obama raised over \$40 million in March, and he has radio and television ads to show for it. At the same time, Clinton released her tax returns late on a Friday, as if she were ashamed that she and her husband had earned over \$100 million since leaving the White House. Obama has all the momentum, the media, and the hype.

As teachers and former steelworkers got up to share their stories at the Jobs Summit, the Clinton campaign staff brought in food for the traveling press. Immediately, the bloggers and wire-reporters left their computers and noisily tore open containers. Up near the stage, a war veteran shared a heart-breaking story about local teenagers being swallowed up by drug addiction because they lacked economic opportunity. A 33-year public school teacher complained that she has watched not only music programs disappear from Pittsburgh schools, but also all the vocational classes as well. The stories were moving, but the press was too busy pawing through aluminum trays of baked ziti to notice. A man wearing his father's old U.A.W. t-shirt got up to leave the room. He glanced over at the laptop jockeys and the full spread of food before them, "You guys get all the good stuff," he said and smiled. ■

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# He is Penn State

Barack Obama's rapturous welcome

By Scott McConnell

WEEKS HAVE PASSED since Barack Obama's speeches could make bloggers emit oceanic feelings through their keyboards. Obamaism is no longer fresh or poised to sweep the world before it. Jeremiah Wright has complicated matters, as has the episodic sourness of the candidate's wife Michelle. Obama trails John McCain in most national polls and has yet to put Hillary away.

He remains, however, a first-rate politician, with better media and communication skills than his rivals. There was no way to foresee his Teflon quality, that ability to glide through messes with nothing sticking. What other figure could survive media scrutiny of two decades of close association with the Reverend Wright and come through unruffled, dusting himself off as if it were a bump in the road?

The Pennsylvania primary will be a decisive contest, and during the first week of intense campaigning, Bill Clinton drew more than 6,000 to an indoor event at Penn State. Three days later, Obama drew 22,000 to an outdoor rally on the campus. People had to stand in line for two hours on a chilly Sunday morning, shuffle along slowly through security, and wait for hours more. The thousands did so cheerfully.

West of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's population is very white. But sports are probably the most powerful integrating force in American society, and at a large state university, they give blacks a unique status niche. Virtually all the young people waiting to hear Obama were white, but the volunteers who handled crowd control were a racially mixed

group. The men funneling the lines through the metal detectors were large, clean-cut black guys, several wearing Penn State football sweatshirts. As the crowd settled in, a tackle sang the national anthem, on key and well, without accompaniment. Introducing Sen. Bob Casey, who would introduce Obama, was Penn State quarterback Lydell Sargeant, also black. Judging by his reception, he appeared to be the school's most well known and popular student.

Obama began his speech—and received his loudest response of the day—by initiating the call and response football chant: “We are ... PENN STATE.” Over 22,000 people jumping and yelling at the top of their lungs. He noted that he had just played some basketball with Senator Casey and a few “Lady Nittany Lions.”

This fusion of realms—sport and politics—is a comfort zone for the campaign and a reminder that the most important consequence of the integration of America's playing fields in the '50s and '60s was less the opening of opportunities for a relatively small number of athletes but the acclimation of millions of whites to seeing blacks in positions of honor and leadership.

Obama's speech was unremarkable. But the delivery was smooth and polished, the work of an entertainer as much as a politician, a man comfortable with the microphone, *bien dans sa peau* in the French phrase. No young women fainted, and few in the crowd displayed wild exuberance. But the mood was attentive. People were happy to be there.

Obama's basic riffs are familiar to TV watchers, but new wrinkles are added.

He said, “I believe in capitalism, free markets, and in entrepreneurship,” as if the campaign had recognized that there might be some doubt about this hovering over the former community organizer. If one was inclined to think of Obama as a leftist with an agenda to gently guide America toward socialism, there are indications one could point to: Che Guevara posters in his Houston campaign office, casual Chicago ties with some former Weather Underground types, hints of Marxian conspiracy phrasing in his otherwise timely 2002 antiwar speech, with its charge that the war was “an effort to distract us” from rising poverty rates. Jeremiah Wright, one recalls, preaches liberation theology as much as black nationalism.

But there's something about Obama that makes such speculation seem not quite on point. Perhaps it is that he appears to be finding his way, still searching for core beliefs. He effectively uses uncertainty as a prop: “Wall Street is teetering on the brink of nobody knows what,” he told the crowd, a more felicitous line than the standard political pose of make-believe mastery. Of course pie-in-the-sky liberalism remains. He promises everyone healthcare as good as that available to U.S. senators. Democrats have said such things for years. Hopefully no one believes them.

Foreign policy is the root of antiwar conservative interest in Obama; his Iraq comments, his emphasis on the cost and the missed opportunity to defeat al-Qaeda draw applause. He promises not only to end the war but “end the mindset that got the U.S. into war.” This is impor-



tant, a slap at the whole neoconservative/liberal hawk intellectual edifice. Not for Obama the routine argument that “the occupation was woefully mismanaged by the Bush administration.” Fair warning that he isn’t planning a recycled administration of Brookings Institution and *New Republic* types striving to put a “Trumanesque” gloss on neocon policies.

He stresses something one hears more frequently in private conversation: that his election would transform America’s image in the world. Abu Ghraib can’t be erased nor the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and Americans killed and maimed made whole. But, he says, an Obama administration will tell

the world “America is Back.” It’s an effective line. There is devilry in the details, of course. He mentions in the next breath readiness to provide leadership on Darfur and climate change. But the line promises both a rupture with the present and a restoration of continuity with a pre-George W. Bush national narrative—a message more forceful and broadly appealing than George McGovern’s “Come Home America.”

When the Pennsylvania campaign began, polls showed Hillary with double-digit leads. Days after Obama spoke at Penn State, one outlying measure showed him ahead. His financial and media advantages in the state are enormous, reinforced by his superiority as a

campaigner. Much of Pennsylvania is Appalachian country, a broad geographic and cultural designation. It is a state laced with the sort of counties in which Hillary has previously trounced Obama. But it is football country as well, and Obama, now touring the state with several retired Pittsburgh Steelers, can plausibly dream of wrapping up the nomination battle in the Keystone State.

Then the country could settle down to the most visceral general-election clash in living memory: aging hero John McCain, “running for George Bush’s third term” in Obama’s terse description, versus a man who spent nearly two decades in Jeremiah Wright’s pews. It will be the ultimate test of Teflon. ■

## The Lady to His Left

PITTSBURGH, PA—In her first campaign appearance in the crucial Pennsylvania primary race, Michelle Obama wanted to be honest with the students at Carnegie Mellon. “I’m not supposed to be here,” she said. “All the statistics say a little black girl from the south side of Chicago is not supposed to be here.” The mostly white collegians cheered her achievement.

Mrs. Obama continued, “I had the nerve to go to Princeton. They told me, ‘You don’t have the test scores.’ But then I graduated with departmental honors!” Light applause followed. She continued, “For every one of you standing here, there are many more at home who are not here, not because they aren’t ready.” The meritocratic achievers at Carnegie Mellon had a palpable desire for Mrs. Obama to move on. Hadn’t they deserved their admission to higher education? “These folks who are supposed to be so much more prepared and ready,” she continued, “every time I sat around the table and looked at these folks, there was no magic there.” Maybe a little too honest.

Barack Obama self-deprecatingly claims that his wife is a better speaker than he is. It’s true. She doesn’t use notes. Her smile is warm and genuine. She doesn’t sound slick. But she does sound aggrieved. Barack doesn’t say that his wife is to his left politically, but she can’t speak to a college audience without reminding them that their privilege is, in some way, unjust.

Earlier in her address, Mrs. Obama spoke in the cadence of militant social democracy. We are governed by fear, she

said, “And the problem with being in a country that is being guided by fear is that it cuts us off from one another.” Her husband, she promises, will deliver us from our apathy and unite us for social justice: “You can’t be complacent anymore. You can’t not vote, can’t use fear as an excuse. You have to communicate, you have to organize in your churches and schools and synagogues. Don’t vote him in because you think that that’s it. You vote for Barack because you are ready to own this.” Is America ready for a first lady that speaks like a veteran SDS agitator?

This election isn’t just about America’s dreams, Michelle told her audience. “Understand that the world is watching us as well. There are millions of little stars [children] out there hoping and praying that we can do this.” The students in the audience recovered their enthusiasm, raising signs of “Future First Lady” and cheering the idea that the world would thank them.

Michelle believes that her husband is suited to govern this country because of his unique identity. “Imagine a president who respects other cultures without fear, not because he received a policy briefing from a bunch of Washington insiders but because he’s got a grandmother in one of those villages.”

This understanding of the Obama campaign manages to combine crude populism with a quasi-Marxist definition of “fear,” then adds a strong dose of one-world multiculturalism. Judging from the reception her statements received, Michelle isn’t the only one who sees it that way. —Michael Dougherty

# The Ron Paul Evolution

The campaign winds down, but the movement is just beginning.

By Daniel McCarthy

"RON PAUL OWNS THE FUTURE," influential evangelical Doug Wead concluded in an early April post on his personal blog. Wead makes an unlikely Paul enthusiast: his religious background might seem a better fit for Mike Huckabee. And his personal history—as an adviser to both Presidents Bush—might have inclined him toward the triumphant establishment candidate, John McCain. But in Ron Paul and the movement that championed him, Wead saw something remarkable: "His is a campaign of ideas. ... His army was left unchallenged on the battlefield. Now their ideas have taken root and they will grow."

Yes, they will—they have already begun to. The Ron Paul "revolution," as it is known to its adherents, has made deep inroads into an area where Republicans are otherwise weak: energizing and mobilizing young people. Already, Paul has inspired other Republicans, mostly young themselves, to campaign for Congress on his antiwar, fiscally conservative platform. A new youth movement is also coming into being as Students for Ron Paul reconfigures into a permanent libertarian-conservative activist organization, Young Americans for Liberty. And these are just the first manifestations of the revolution's second act, as youth gains political experience.

Wead had no connection to the campaign, but early on he sensed what it might become. The day after Super Tuesday, Wead compared the legacy of the Paul campaign to that of Barry Goldwater's 1964 run. Paul's supporters, he

wrote, "are producing blogs and papers and books and like Goldwater's revolution they will be able to say that they could see what the country missed. They were there when history was made."

Fine words and, I hope, true, but at the time they were published, I didn't want to put them on the Paul campaign blog, the Daily Dose. I had been hired a month earlier—a few days shy of my 30th birthday—after Paul's disheartening fifth-place finish in the New Hampshire primary. The day of the primary, Jan. 8, *The New Republic* published racially inflammatory excerpts from newsletters printed under Paul's name in the early 1990s. On Jan. 9, the campaign's phone lines were jammed with callers demanding a Granite State recount. The campaign needed rapid response. They needed a blog. They hired me.

My job was to get out the latest news about the Paul movement and reinforce the message that the candidate and campaign chiefs put out—keep the troops informed and raise their spirits.

The first issue I had to tackle was not a morale builder: there would be no recount. Paul did not want one; it would only distract from upcoming battles, including the Nevada caucuses—where Paul would finish second—and the Super Tuesday primaries. And within the campaign, we knew there was no need to invoke voter fraud to account for the fifth-place result. We got the votes we expected to get. What we did not anticipate was record-breaking turnout, which overwhelmed our base. A minor candidate, Albert Howard, eventually pre-

vailed upon New Hampshire for a recount. Paul picked up 38 additional votes. Howard lost one—he only had 44 to begin with.

Seeing what happened in New Hampshire, we knew that Super Tuesday did not bode well. The plan was to target caucus states, where turnout would be much smaller than in primaries. A first-place caucus finish and a handful of seconds could kick-start Paul's momentum and give us a shot in the primaries. All the while we would work to win national delegates at Republican state conventions. In most primary states, delegates to the Republican National Convention are chosen at state conventions, and it's possible for a candidate who loses the primary to win delegates. At a brokered national convention, Paul would be in a strong position. Alas, a brokered convention was not to be.

After Paul's second-place in Nevada, we had high hopes for Louisiana's Jan. 22 caucuses. But Bayou State chicanery scuttled those dreams and robbed us of a clean silver-medal finish.

Super Tuesday brought the results we were dreading. Even Montana's caucuses, which we hoped to win, bore disappointment: second again. Good, but not good enough. Late on Feb. 5, as we awaited the last results, the twentysomethings on staff headed across the street from headquarters to the unofficial drinking establishment of the campaign, Mei's Asian Bistro. A week before we had raised the rafters—I was jollied up with gin enough to pick up a \$300 tab, not bad on a blogger's salary. But on Feb. 5, there

was not much jollity. We had no idea whether there would be a campaign the next day. Around 1:30 a.m. I returned to the office and tried to hearten the troops. I put up a post on the Daily Dose that drew inspiration from a line of the *Aeneid* that Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises—one of the formative intellectual influences on Ron Paul—had adopted as his motto: *tu ne cede malis sed contra audentior*. “Do not give in to evils, but proceed ever more boldly against them.” I wrote to fortify my own resolve as much as our supporters’.

The next day, Feb. 6, Wead published his first assessment of Paul’s paradoxical success. Our campaign manager brought it to my attention. But I was reluctant to put it on the blog: it conceded too much to John McCain, I thought, awarding him the nomination before he had gone through the formality of winning the delegates needed to clinch it. What I did not know then, but soon discovered, was that Wead’s words had resonated with Paul himself. Once that became clear, I put it right up.

## OVER 700 STUDENTS RECEIVED PAUL LIKE A ROCK STAR, WITH WILD CHEERS AS HE SPOKE ABOUT GETTING OUT OF IRAQ AND RESTRAINING FEDERAL SPENDING.

That evening was an all-staff dinner, with about 40 attendees. The event was a morale booster, and Paul himself delivered the good news: the campaign was continuing, indeed, redoubling its efforts. Two notes in Paul’s remarks resounded. First, he emphasized that the battle he was fighting was for the middle class, and it would be won or lost—today or in years to come—in the heartland. He was campaigning for soldiers who had gone to Iraq and lost limbs if not lives; for families who had lost jobs and homes—and sometimes sons or daughters in the war. Other candidates could emote—Huckabee did,

and Romney became an improbable populist in Michigan, to victorious effect—but only Paul addressed the forces driving America’s decline: the twin evils of unfettered spending and an enfeebled currency. A strong dollar, backed by gold, would be no panacea, but it would preserve Americans’ savings and might save jobs.

The second theme that impressed me in Paul’s remarks was the effect that young people had had in buoying his spirits. Paul loved talking to students, and that enthusiasm was reciprocated, as I saw at a Feb. 13 Georgetown University event. The auditorium was filled to capacity; over 700 students received Paul like a rock star, with wild cheers as he spoke about getting out of Iraq and slashing federal spending. By any measure, the Republican Party has lost the youth of America—a 2006 Pew survey found that only 35 percent of young people identify as Republicans or Republican-leaning, against 48 percent who side with the Democrats. The parties had been close to parity in 1988, after eight years of Reagan.

Eight years of Bush had cost the GOP a generation. Ron Paul offered the prospect of winning them back.

The campaign drew down after Feb. 5. With Paul’s Texas congressional primary impending on March 4, he began to spend more time in his home state. For the presidential campaign, there was one more chance to buy back momentum: the Feb. 12 “Potomac Primaries” in Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. As ever, primaries posed a steep challenge, but we had two reeds of hope: in Washington, Republicans are so light on the ground that an upset win might have been possible. And if Mike Huckabee could beat McCain in Virginia,

we might yet be headed for a brokered convention. Neither prospect panned out: Paul came third in the District, behind Huckabee, and Huckabee fell short of McCain in Virginia. It was another subdued night at Mei’s.

Paul swept to an easy victory in his congressional primary, crushing challenger Chris Peden 71 to 29 percent. Voters who get to know Paul like him, and Texas’s 14th congressional district has come to know him very well in the 12 years that he has represented it. But McCain won too, in the presidential primary, and came out of Texas with enough delegates to secure the nomination. Huckabee dropped out.

But Paul campaigns on, evangelizing his message of peace and sound money, giving voters a choice, however symbolic, to cast their ballots for a Republican other than McCain. My time as Paul’s blogger ended the week before Texas, however, as the campaign continued to contract.

Barring a temperamental explosion, ill health, or an unprecedented delegate revolt at the Republican convention, John McCain will be the party’s nominee. But does the future, as Doug Wead suggests, belong to Ron Paul?

Even if Paul had prevailed in every contest and were on his way to beating the Democrat in November, the revolution would just be beginning. Without support in Congress there is little a president can do—if he accepts the constraints of the Constitution. Yet changing Congress requires change in the media, in education, in the grassroots organization of voters, and in a myriad of other fields. Even in the best of worlds, the Paul movement’s work would have barely begun.

The second act of the Paul revolution now proceeds at a quickening pace, outstripping anything other Republicans are attempting. Its work is not without precedent. Goldwater lost the Republi-



can nomination in 1960, but his volunteers built the infrastructure that allowed him to win it four years later, and although he lost the general election, the conservative movement rose from the ashes of his campaign. Pat Robertson lost the nomination in 1988; he didn't even get as far as Ron Paul did this year. Yet Robertson's race laid the foundation for the Christian Coalition, which was instrumental in the Republicans' 1994 victories. The organizational infrastructure built by Robertson and later improved upon by James Dobson and others surpassed anything the Moral Majority constructed and made the Religious Right the most important grassroots Republican constituency—one Bush exploited to full effect in 2004 and which single-handedly propelled Huckabee's campaign this year.

Now constitutional conservatives, foreign-policy realists, libertarians, Taft Republicans, and domestic-policy Gold-waterites need institutional structures every bit as good as those of the Republican establishment and the Religious Right. Paul has the tools to build those institutions: a mailing list; a \$5 million war chest; cadres of activists with experience in the hard, unglamorous work of ballot access and convention politics; a brain trust; and a youth auxiliary.

Paul has only hinted at what he has planned. His existing political vehicles, the Foundation for Rational Economic Education and the Liberty PAC, will expand. More is yet to come. And already a wider movement takes shape outside of official channels.

Candidates across the country have declared themselves "Ron Paul Republicans" in House and Senate bids. Indeed, on the otherwise dark night of the Potomac Primaries, self-designated Ron Paul Republicans won four Maryland GOP congressional nominations—all in heavily Democratic districts, unfortunately.

They are just the beginning. In North Carolina, engineer and physician B.J. Lawson is running as a Ron Paul Republican in the 4th congressional district. In Virginia, Paul supporter Vern McKinley is challenging 14-term incumbent Republican Frank Wolf in the 10th congressional district, while next door in the eighth district, Amit Singh is fighting for the GOP nomination to take on Democrat Jim Moran in November.

Singh exemplifies many of the qualities of a Ron Paul Republican. He's a first-time candidate, an antiwar fiscal conservative. "I was a big proponent of Ron Paul," says Singh. "What piqued my interest in him was in the May debate of

"I learned about it through the Ron Paul Meet-Ups," she says.

"I would say that most of our supporters were former Ron Paul supporters as well, not all of them, but it's definitely an area of recruitment, as we share many of the same ideals," Singh relates, noting that he also finds broad support among "conservatives who are fiscally responsible."

Only two non-incumbents have so far picked up endorsements from Paul himself. One is Senate candidate Murray Sabrin of New Jersey. The other is Jim Forsythe, who has raised over \$100,000 in his bid for the Republican nomination in New Hampshire's first congressional

#### ON THE OTHERWISE DARK NIGHT OF THE POTOMAC PRIMARIES, **SELF-DESIGNATED RON PAUL REPUBLICANS WON** FOUR MARYLAND GOP CONGRESSIONAL NOMINATIONS.

last year, the exchange between him and Rudy Giuliani. He talked about blowback. Working in the intelligence community now, and I have been for the last 10 years, when he talked about that I actually took notice and said, 'Wow, he understands what's going on.' So that's when I started following him." Singh eventually maxed out contributions to Paul's campaign and collected signatures for ballot access in Virginia. "I always felt like I was politically in tune," Singh says, "but I was never politically active until Ron Paul. He was really somebody who inspired me to get off my couch and actually go do something."

Singh doesn't agree with Paul on every issue, but that hasn't dampened his appeal to Paul supporters—or staff. I counted seven past and present Paul staffers at Singh's April 6 campaign kickoff in Alexandria. One former Paul field coordinator, Nena Bartlett, who organized get-out-the-vote efforts in Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota, has joined Singh's campaign as coalitions director.

district. Like Singh, Forsythe has recruited a Paul campaign veteran, former finance director Jonathan Bydlak. "I look at him and I see in him the potential future of the movement," Bydlak says of Forsythe, "He may not be as philosophical as Ron ... but I do believe he's got the political wherewithal, he cares about the way he articulates the message."

Not long after talking to Bydlak, I learned that Forsythe might withdraw from the congressional race, possibly with an eye toward running for the state legislature instead. That may be a wise move. All the Ron Paul Republicans running this year face long odds against making it to Congress.

In any event, there is more to the Ron Paul movement than political campaigns, as one of Bydlak's other activities shows. He has launched an ambitious project to connect individual donors with students needing scholarships through a website, [www.discover-scholars.org](http://www.discover-scholars.org), bypassing university finan-

cial-aid offices. “The concept for Discover Scholars is very much born out of Ron’s views and my political beliefs,” he says, “in that it’s this idea of letting the free market decide educational funding.”

Key to his plan is the power of financial transparency, which Bydlak discovered working for the campaign. “I think it was revolutionary not just for the Ron Paul campaign,” he says about showing fundraising numbers online in real time, “but to political campaigns in general. If you look at other campaigns, both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama had fundraising widgets on their site, Hillary had a counter for the number of phone calls made. For all the talk about Obama’s campaign being the innovative online campaign, they were the ones copying us. We saw the results of the transparency. It empowered individual supporters, who were smaller in numbers than those of other campaigns but raised similar or even larger amounts of money.”

On his website, Bydlak describes the motive behind his project: “I care most about helping individual students have as much of an opportunity to succeed as I did.”

Youth is a common denominator in the efforts inspired by Ron Paul—somewhat ironically, considering that at 72, Paul was the oldest candidate in the 2008 field. The Ron Paul Republicans running for Congress, as well as their staffs, tend to be young. Amit Singh is 33. Jonathan Bydlak is 24. And Jeff Frazee, organizer of the largest youth-based Ron Paul spin-off, is 25.

Frazee remains on Paul’s campaign staff as national youth coordinator. He’s transitioning Students for Paul—with 500 chapters across all 50 states—into something the Right has not had in nearly 30 years: a nationwide organization of young conservatives and libertarians. What Young Americans for Free-

dom was to Goldwater and Reagan, Frazee hopes his group, Young Americans for Liberty, will be to future Ron Paul Republicans.

“Its mission is winning on principle,” Frazee says of YAL. “I like to see it as a kind of a variation on the Leadership Institute mission to identify, train, and place conservatives in media, public policy, and government—training and placing right-wing libertarians and learning how to win on principle, taking the Leadership Institute and putting more of an ideological bent on it.” As Frazee explains, the Leadership Institute—Republican activist Morton Blackwell’s organization, where Frazee once worked as deputy national field director—is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that cannot turn anyone away from its programs or endorse candidates or legislation.

YAL will have a 501(c)(4) component: supporting and opposing candidates will be very much part of its mission, and it won’t necessarily be open to everyone. “It will be restrictive in the sense that it will be identified with some philosophy,” Frazee says. The group’s activities are planned to be “kind of a take off of the tradition of Young Americans for Freedom, in terms of the amount of activism and youth organization. But at the same time it’s very different from Young Americans for Freedom, too, because of its issues and its philosophy”—which will parallel the ideas of Ron Paul.

Frazee has a mailing list of over 31,000 students, and he’s administrator of a Paul group on Facebook with over 62,500 members. Paul’s personal support for the project means that Frazee should have little trouble raising money. Already he has drawn up plans for a national student conference this summer. “From the interest we’ve had this far, I’m pretty confident we can have at least the low end [attendance] of 250 students, and maybe 500 at the high end.” Once the group is established,

Frazee plans to target states “where there’s actually a possibility that a libertarian Republican can win, building up the chapters around there, as well as in some of the key states where we already have strong Students for Ron Paul chapters, and also key states like New Hampshire, where we already have a libertarian mindset.”

With only the College Republicans and College Libertarians to compete with—both of them limited by their status as party auxiliaries—Young Americans for Liberty has the potential to reshape the youth politics of the Right. And as part of a panoply of institutions arising out of the Paul campaign, YAL could be even more influential.

What other institutions might emerge from the Paul revolution remains unclear. Not everyone associated with the movement is confident of its future: “People are running in different directions,” says one former staffer, “Unless there’s some sort of centralized apparatus to continue to feed them the message, I don’t think that a lot of [Paul supporters] are going to be the kind of people to stay in it. The young, or the ones who don’t have as much to contribute, are going to be the ones who stick around.”

In the near term, at least, there is a vehicle for Ron Paul’s message—his new book, *The Revolution: A Manifesto*. Unlike his previous books, which were compilations of speeches and essays, this one is an organic whole, a cohesive portrait of Paul’s philosophy. “The revolution my supporters refer to will persist long after my retirement from politics,” he writes. “Here is my effort to give them a long-term manifesto based on ideas, and perhaps some short-term marching orders.” “Reading orders” might be more accurate—*The Revolution* ends with a list of 48 recommended books. The list won’t win any elections. But it may form a few maturing minds. ■

# McCain: More Enemies, Please

JOHN MCCAIN'S address to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council drew praise from pundits for its stated loathing of war and, even more implausibly, for breaking with the current administration. Exemplifying the media swoon, David Broder dubbed McCain's vision "a vastly different approach" when in almost every particular it is an intensified version of the Bush Doctrine.

If implemented, McCain's foreign policy heralds worsening relations with Europe, Russia, and the rising powers of Asia, as well as guaranteeing the perpetuation of the war in Iraq.

McCain retains his traditional hostility toward Russia, which he ridiculously dubbed "revanchist" and promised to expel from the G-8. Further, he insisted that the West show that "the solidarity of NATO, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, is indivisible and that the organization's doors remain open to all democracies committed to the defense of freedom." The blanket statement welcoming "all democracies" has to be read as proof that McCain will continue the dangerous path of pursuing membership for Ukraine, Georgia, and perhaps other ex-Soviet republics even farther east. Together with threatened expulsion from the G-8, NATO expansion into historically Russian territories promises increased tensions with Moscow and with major European allies, especially Germany, whose economic and political interests are tied to Russia.

McCain's "vastly different approach" is just as elusive when it comes to democracy promotion. He called for the creation of a League of Democracies, a permanent coalition of the willing based on the fantasy that the world's democracies necessarily have "shared interests." As the last five years have made clear, democracy may or may not benefit the peoples who

adopt it, but it ensures the full and sometimes radical expression of the divergent interests of different nations as interpreted by the majority. McCain shows no sign of having recognized the dangers to U.S. interests or regional stability posed by democracy promotion.

Where McCain does suggest some change, it is not surprising and will do little for American interests. He expressed his opposition to torture and using Guantanamo Bay as a detention facility. He also stated his support for international co-operation on climate change that includes India and China in any agreement. However welcome this may be, these changes will not repair damage to our relations with Europe. They will not overcome European opposition to continuing the Iraq War nor encourage greater European participation in Afghanistan. And while inclusion of India and China under the terms of any new climate treaty would remove a glaring double standard of Kyoto, it will generate resistance from both rising powers that could undermine U.S. relations and limit the possibility of security and technology collaboration with India.

As for China, McCain seems intent on a more confrontational course than the Bush administration, which has generally avoided treating Beijing with its usual inflexibility and arrogance. Though he says that China and America are not "destined" to be enemies, McCain implies that hostility is possible if China doesn't abandon its neocolonial satellites in Africa and Asia and cease efforts to maximize its economic influence. If Hu Jintao called for Washington to "isolate pariah states" that happened to be our allies or trading partners, it's doubtful McCain would accede to his wishes.

Here we find the fundamental similar-

ity between Bush and McCain's policies: Other states may legitimately project power and influence only when Washington approves. And others' relations even with their neighbors are our business, while our policies in every corner of the world are none of theirs.

On Iraq and Afghanistan, McCain poses the alternatives of becoming stable democracies or sinking "back into chaos and extremism," but neither was chaotic before the wars and Iraq was not in the grip of sectarian extremism as it is today. Tying our fate to the rise of such stable democracies, McCain implicitly argues that American security is dependent on democracies that will not survive our departure, another way of saying that American involvement will never end. Dusting off the "arc of instability" idea, McCain suggests that both Iraq and Afghanistan are at the "heart" of the same region, and that both are equally important to fighting jihadism. But this only makes sense if Iran is part of the "transcendent challenge" McCain describes, which would imply that the sectarian government in Baghdad, whose members are backed by Tehran, is also part of the threat. So success in Iraq would mean that the Iraqi government must first be stabilized and then destroyed if we are to have "the triumph of religious tolerance over violent radicalism."

McCain's incoherent understanding of the "transcendent challenge" that he makes the centerpiece of his policy makes him unfit for the office he seeks. Far from a "vastly different approach," he will continue to mismatch means and ends, and his administration will have no coherent and obtainable objectives—except to antagonize other major world powers and grind down the American military in desultory warfare. ■



# The Case for Recession

Federal meddling is no way to right a struggling market.

**By Nelson Hultberg**

BANK OF AMERICA economist Mickey Levy recently made one of the most astonishing comments heard in a long time, says Chicago financial commentator Bill King in his "King Report": "The Fed knows its credibility would be damaged if the economy slipped into recession." King's response: "When did recession become an abhorrent, avoid-at-all-costs phenomenon?"

Recessions have been common throughout our history, and the country has always survived because our political and economic leaders understood that a periodic "riding out" was necessary to cleanse the system of excesses and enable it to return to real growth. What is different this time that makes the Fed so desperate to avoid a healthy purging?

The Keynesian chickens set loose in 1936 are coming home to roost. In response to his critics' concern over the effects of his inflationary economics over the long run, Keynes scornfully replied, "In the long run, we're all dead." This pseudo-wisdom permitted ravenous Westerners to believe that shrinking history and responsibility down to one's own lifespan was acceptable. It allowed us to commit the perennial and predominant human sin of blanking out the future. As a result, we increasingly suffer the effects of a boom-bust economy because, of course, we're not all dead. The Keynesian generation's children and their children continue on. It's called posterity.

From its start, Keynesian economics was a brazen, short-range experiment in

getting something for nothing, mingled with an embarrassing measure of self-delusion. It all sounds absolutely marvelous, one can imagine FDR replying to his Brain Trust when informed of the wonders of Keynes's "new economics." If capitalism has reached its mature stage and can no longer produce enough purchasing power, then Washington must step in and get the system going again. If people don't have enough money, we simply print more and our problems will be solved. Our growth can be as great as we want. Our wealth will be unlimited. We will usher in the millennium. How could we not have thought of this before?

Stripped of all the eloquent conceptualizations and slick technical jargon, this was the great revolutionary insight of John Maynard Keynes: if we want to become wealthier as a nation and avoid economic recessions, all we need to do is print more money.

The current financial tremors rumbling through the world's economies are trying to tell us that this paradigm, like all huckster schemes of easy wealth, is a fraud. The grand Keynesian theoretical flaw now manifesting in our lives is as follows: central bank credit expansion ultimately leads to massive debt saturation and malinvestment throughout the economy, which reverses the boom that credit expansion was meant to perpetuate. Ultimately, the system must not just disinflate via Fed interest-rate maneuvering, it must go through a severe purging to eliminate the monster levels of debt and malinvestment before a gen-

uine growth cycle can be reignited. This leads to a mega-crisis that brings on depression, runaway inflation, or a combination of the two, called stagflation. Which one of the three occurs will depend upon how political and monetary authorities react.

In the early stages of all credit expansions, businesses flourish, and the Fed is able to manipulate the expansion's boom-bust nature in a tolerable way. But once an economy becomes debt saturated from massive injections of credit over time, borrowing and confidence drop off. This causes the rate of money-supply growth to decline by negating the central bank's power to pyramid credit, which brings extreme disinflationary pressures no matter what the Fed does with interest rates. If the preceding build-up of debt is severe and the resultant decrease of confidence widespread, such pressures then morph into a far more serious crisis.

Down deep, the Fed and its circle of monetary bureaucrats fear that this time the fundamental buoys of the economy could sink, ushering in a credit deflation that would suck America and the world into the vortex of depression.

In all the recessions since World War II, the Fed has been able to maneuver economic forces in America to induce recovery. The prior inflationary booms were not outrageous, the nation was a solid creditor in the world, and there was a substantial cache of savings among the people. It was a matter only of squeezing the speculative excesses out of the system. Some prolonged pain

was required but nothing that could not be endured by men and women who had a “life is tough” philosophy instilled in their youth.

This time is different. The prior boom has been quite egregious, America is no longer a creditor nation, and there are no savings left under the mattresses of the people. Moreover, the Age of Aquarius generation is not very appreciative of the tough adages of its parents. It subscribes to the code of immediacy instead: We want what we want, and we want it now.

In 1980, Fed Chairman Paul Volker broke the back of ’70s stagflation by raising interest rates to 18 percent. This restored credibility to the dollar, choked off inflation, and threw the country into a vicious recession. But it also allowed the economy to purge large, stultifying amounts of debt and malinvestment, and the U.S. eventually returned to health and real growth. Recession provided a beneficial housecleaning.

Ben Bernanke will not be able to clean today’s house as Volker did in 1980. Far too much debt and malinvestment have accumulated. Far too many other nations are implicated. Far too little savings and mental toughness remain.

As King puts it, “Recession has become dreadful because of the amount of debt, dubious investments, derivatives and crappy paper that infests the U.S. financial system. Fear is high that any debt and consumer retrenchment, which are both natural and necessary for long-term health, will quickly chain react into the dreaded debt deflation and system implosion.”

“System implosion”—this is what gnaws at the brains of Bernanke’s boys. Our debt and derivatives monsters are gargantuan. The chain of banks caught up in becoming 21st-century casinos instead of prudent portfolio managers is ominous. There are thousands of explo-

sive mines planted into our economy by seven decades of power-hungry political regimes and corporate cavaliers brandishing a know-nothing regard for the next generation. Any one of these mines could trigger the reaction. So Bernanke lives on the edge of his seat. Humans caught in these kinds of predicaments are prone to panic, just as the Fed has—and will surely do again several times before the recessionary cycle of stagflation and pseudo-growth plays itself out.

Will a depression come? If it does, it won’t be the kind of depression we have experienced in the past. The Fed has the power to inject liquidity, and in contrast to the ’30s, it will do so lavishly. But such liquidity injections cannot solve the underlying problem of pervasive debt and malinvestment. Thus the Fed cannot avoid a severe crisis, it can only change the nature of the crisis with its intervention.

**BEN BERNANKE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CLEAN TODAY’S HOUSE AS VOLKER DID IN 1980. FAR TOO MUCH DEBT AND MALINVESTMENT HAVE ACCUMULATED. FAR TOO MANY OTHER NATIONS ARE IMPLICATED.**

What is more likely over the next 10 to 15 years is a highly exacerbated version of the 1970s—escalating prices, diminishing real growth, more government manipulation and control, wars, taxation, and massive stagflation with no Volkerian rescue possible because no Fed chairman and no political administration will have the courage to allow the necessary debt housecleaning. And even if such men should arise, the outrage from Wall Street and Main Street would quickly force a reassessment.

What then is the answer to this wild boom-bust system that Keynesianism has given us? If we are to believe George Soros, the answer is even more government intervention into the economy and

its monetary system. In a January *Financial Times* article, he castigates the political administrations of the ’80s for their naïve belief in Ronald Reagan’s “magic of the marketplace.” He calls it market fundamentalism.

“Fundamentalists,” Soros schools us, “believe that markets tend towards equilibrium and the common interest is best served by allowing participants to pursue their self-interest. It is an obvious misconception, because it was the intervention of the authorities that prevented financial markets from breaking down, not the markets themselves.”

On the contrary, Soros is the victim of misconception, and his error can be traced back to the original sin of not thinking long range. It is his revered “government intervention” that brings on the crisis in the first place when the Federal Reserve intervenes to manipulate interest rates lower, causing the

inflationary boom, which requires more intervention to fix.

The bust period only comes about because there is first an inordinate boom. And the boom period only becomes disproportionate when government central banks intervene to inflate the currency at a faster rate than goods and services are growing, which brings on chronic price inflation. This inflation becomes possible only because we have allowed the Federal Reserve to have arbitrary power over the money supply, which began in 1913, was furthered when FDR took us off the domestic gold standard, and was then finalized in 1971 when Nixon took us off the international gold standard.

None of the “breakdown problems” that Soros attributes to the free market is due to the nature of capitalism. It is not the free market but government intervention in the free market that has caused the economic instability and social turmoil we endure today.

Not that a free market is perfect. It is, however, the least imperfect of all political-economic forms of organization. But in order to understand this, one must take a broader view. As the economist Henry Hazlitt observed, “The art of economics consists in looking not merely at the immediate but at the longer effects of any act or policy; it consists in tracing the consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups.”

It is true, as Soros claims, that a *laissez-faire* economy does not tend toward equilibrium. But then no economy ever does. Such a thing exists only in textbooks. Free-market economy does tend toward relentless growth through what Joseph Schumpeter called “creative destruction.” Keynesians believe that this process is nefarious and insist that we must use government to control it. They thus fall prey to the error that a utopian economy can be planned to give us growth and prosperity absent the requisite freedom. Natural laws such as supply and demand, profit and loss, and diminishing returns work to bring about realignment far better than any gaggle of bureaucrats in Washington.

What is the lesson here? Those who hop onto the monetary inflation tiger in pursuit of more wealth than they are willing to produce must eventually pay for their indiscretion with a severe and protracted economic crisis.

Mountainous loads of debt and malinvestment are now overwhelming us. Much of this burden must be liquidated before genuine demand and growth can be restored. Extensive reform is required

if we are to minimize the hardship. Economist Ludwig von Mises warned us decades ago, “There is no means of avoiding the final collapse of a boom brought about by credit expansion. The alternative is only whether the crisis should come sooner as the result of a voluntary abandonment of further credit expansion, or later as a final and total catastrophe of the currency system involved.”

This is Bernanke’s worst nightmare—that Mises ends up just as right in his analysis of expansionary credit policy by a government’s central bank as he was in his analysis of the inevitable collapse of socialism as an economic system.

The sun is now setting on the Keynes-Soros-Bernanke model, though it has a way to go yet. Major paradigms of history change laboriously over long stretches of time, and this one will be no different. People like Soros and the statist entourage around him still maintain much power over our lives. But it is a fading power, and the coming years will hopefully pound the final nails into their ideological coffin. ■

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## Bitter Pill

Globalization is a prescription for layoffs.

By Tom Cairney

I WAS LATE to the meeting, so I wasn’t there when they destroyed everyone’s lives. I only got to see the aftermath.

On the previous Sunday, flyers distributed around the cafeteria announced a meeting at the Danbury Sheraton. All employees of Watson Pharmaceuticals, from all three plants in Brewster, Carmel, and Danbury, were told to attend.

Those who were working at the time would be paid; those who had that day off would get overtime. And those who were working that night, like me, and should be sleeping at 1:00 in the afternoon, would get a paid night off. The very generosity of the whole thing was scaring everyone. If they were paying us, the news must be really bad.

For months, talk of shift changes had been flying around. If the buzz was to be believed, we would be cutting back from

four 12-hour shifts to three 8-hour ones. And shift changes meant layoffs. Tom Strohl, the general manager for all three plants, had accidentally let that one slip, and there was no putting the toothpaste back in the tube. We weren’t geniuses, but we could do math. A shift change meant that a quarter of the people in manufacturing would have to go. Their jobs would probably be sent out to the plant in Goa, India that Watson reps bragged about in the presentation they gave when I first applied for the job.

I thought back to the day I interviewed, just over a year earlier. The hiring blitz, they called it. They were talking to dozens of people every day. Now most of those people would have to look for other jobs.

I started at Watson at a crossroads in my life. I was lost and broke and had no health insurance. Watson offered great



coverage. They needed to because their staff turnover was so high.

And the turnover was high because it's a lousy job. It wasn't the worst job on the planet. We weren't smelting manhole covers in Calcutta. But people didn't work there because they had a lot of options. I remember making a snarky remark in my early days there that the building had more mullets than Master's degrees.

The manufacturing shifts were 12 hours, 6:00 to 6:30, Sunday through Tuesday or Thursday through Saturday and alternating Wednesdays. This allowed people to work overtime on the off days or have another job. The pay was such that more than a few also worked at Wal-Mart or waited tables at Cracker Barrel.

They were all required to be at this meeting, but so were lab people, which was strange because only the manufacturing areas should be affected by the rumored shift changes. What was up?

I woke up late that Tuesday afternoon. My ride had left, so I called a cab to get to Danbury. As I entered the hotel, I pulled on the string attached to my belt loop and the badge ripped off, which I figured was some sort of an omen.

When I got to the conference room, it was deathly silent, as if no one—let alone several hundred people—was in the audience. I didn't recognize the man speaking, but I was pretty sure it was Paul Bisaro, the company president.

Tom Strohl had dropped the guillotine before I got there. This meeting was not about shift changes. All employees would be laid off, phased out by 2010. And the wealthiest man in the room, the one person guaranteed a job in 2011, was standing at the podium, calmly explaining that the layoffs were not because the company was losing money. It wasn't that they were going under. They could just make more money by shipping the work out to India. Tom knew it was bogus when he told us last summer that they were not going to sell

us out. Back then, the last thing they needed was people quitting.

When the suit left the podium, no one reacted. No applause. No boos. Nothing. After 30 seconds, one wiseass started clapping, and a few people around him, those that weren't quietly weeping, started to laugh. Strohl got back up and started telling us the rest of the itinerary. We would be dismissed to different rooms to get packets of information, which would tell us about severance and retention packages. He would not be taking questions.

In the meantime, he needed us to be respectful. He had noticed some disrespect for the previous speakers, and it disappointed him. Most of the room was doing mental math about mortgages and kids' tuition, and he was worried about manners. If this had been a union shop, he would have been more concerned about walking out with his head.

Paulie, a mechanic from the Packaging B2 shift, yelled out, "How the f--k can we trust anything you say right now?" Strohl paused and said, "We're not taking questions." Everyone laughed. Paulie was escorted out.

Walking from the auditorium to the rooms upstairs, I remember the soft lighting and pristine décor. There was little to distinguish the place from a funeral parlor, even without the throng of people openly sobbing. Only this wasn't a gathering to pay respects to your great-uncle; this looked like a teenager had been killed in a drunk-driving accident.

In the hotel rooms upstairs, supervi-

sors and managers were handing out the packets. Each room had a table with boxes of tissues laid out. Our severance packages, I thought.

I looked around at my colleagues. I had decided to quit before the meeting; I was going back to college. But there was a 45-year-old Lebanese woman, who had been on the job since she was 18. What was she supposed to do? There was a guy from my department, clearly burnt out from alcohol abuse in his youth. He doesn't drive and has a kid to feed. Where's he going to find work that pays this well as this?

The answer is he won't. She won't. They won't. The new economy is rushing by the working man in this country, and I was watching the sad aftermath, like a car wreck on the highway. Six hundred more people are about to flood the job market, driving down wages. How many will be out of work in three years? Or working jobs that pay half of what they make now? Or dead?

I know that Paul Bisaro hasn't asked himself these questions. If he had, he would probably need the same sleep medication that came off the line in Carmel—made diligently and safely by his employees. But not cheaply. And after all, isn't that what really matters? ■

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**Daniel Larison**

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# The Democracy Business

Clichés of freedom disguise a corporatist reality.

By Ivo Mosley

ALAS, POOR DEMOCRACY! We thought we knew it well! Yet what a strange beast it has turned out to be. How does something that promised such a grand future—the end of history even—turn out to be something that looks more like the end of civilization?

We are used to thinking of democracy as the best of all systems of government. Whether in ancient Athens, Rome, or medieval England, democratic institutions were born of a desire to limit the exercise of political power and to oppose tyranny. They were brought into political life to defend the vulnerable from exploitation. In this way, Michael Oakeshott wrote, democracy “protected human life from being perverted by the tyranny of a person, or fixed by the tyranny of an idea.” These attempts to protect the vulnerable were imperfect—as all attempts must be. “Utopia” is Greek for no place.

As individual rights became recognized in law—and in society and conduct generally—the spirit of democracy encouraged, perhaps even created, a new habit of mind: assessing the interests of humanity as one. The habit is now familiar; we are accustomed to judging new developments such as technology or globalization by their effects on humanity as a whole.

Democracy in its best sense means we wish to defend the rights and freedoms of others as if they were our own. Thus are well-meaning citizens made enthusiastic, or at least compliant, when governments claim they are spreading democracy and freedom. But it is

becoming increasingly obvious that they are doing something different. Instead of democracy, we seem to be creating anarchy, tyranny, or governments compliant to Western interests. In place of freedom, we see the power of corporations, the destruction of traditional ways of life, the spread of a consumer culture of unparalleled shallowness.

Are these developments the inevitable result of democracy? Or has our zeal for democracy somehow gone astray or been taken advantage of?

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Democracy is a sacred word, the credo of our age. People otherwise utterly opposed to each other—say, George W. Bush and Noam Chomsky—both claim to want “more democracy.” Absurdities abound on both sides. The Bush administration supports dictators like Uzbekistan’s Islam Karimov for “strategic” reasons. From the other side, John Pilger calls American attempts to destabilize the increasingly dictatorial Hugo Chavez a “war on democracy” while Chavez is assuming dictatorial powers.

And yet, what we are used to calling democracy is not really democracy at all. It is electoral representation. Aristotle, speaking for the Greeks, who, after all, invented democracy, stated explicitly that electoral representation is not a democratic form of government: “When the people in general do not partake of the deliberative power, but certain persons chosen for that purpose, this ... is an oligarchy.” We should not be sur-

prised, then, that we are managed by an elite. What electoral representation has done is change the nature of the elite that presides over us.

As developed by the Greeks, the democratic system was to fill political offices by lot, much as a jury is convened today. Politicians were not elected to represent the people; they were sampled from among the people. They served short terms then returned to ordinary life.

The system had three important characteristics absent from a system of electoral representation. First, the deliberative assembly consisted of ordinary people, not professional power-hunters. Second, these ordinary people were able to concentrate and deliberate properly, unlike voters, who lack the time and information to make informed decisions. Third, each legislative proposal was considered separately, whereas under our system citizens vote infrequently on a raft of generalized proposals.

Electoral representation developed as a political procedure in the Roman republic. In 494 BC, the people—the plebs—went on strike and camped on a hill outside Rome until the nobles agreed to the formation of a people’s assembly. This assembly was for the plebs to make laws for themselves, and its officers were empowered to protect citizens against arbitrary arrest and injustice. Later, in 287, the assembly gained complete legislative power, and Rome became a “democracy” as we use the word today. The nobility continued to monopolize power, though they were forced to admit rich commoners to their

ranks. So electoral representation gave the people a sense of participation and a veto against rank exploitation, while power stayed with the elite.

The republic lasted for more than 400 years. In the words of C.J. Finer in his *History of Government*, "For the greater part of its existence, the central political process in the Republic was the one by which the nobility tried to lead, court or manipulate the Assemblies." After the republic came to an end, the diverse and independent powers of state were all invested in one man, and Rome became an empire. Ironically, Finer says, Rome did not pretend to be a democracy until democracy had slipped away: "Glorified in word, [democracy] had become emptied in content; the two processes marched in tandem."

Over a thousand years later, when pressure built up in the monarchies of Europe for popular participation in government, the Roman model rather than the Greek was followed, giving us the pseudo-democracies we are familiar with today.

The idea behind electoral representation as it developed in England over 300 years was unashamedly oligarchic, or elitist as it would be called today: we should elect our betters, who will make sensible decisions on our behalf. But what kind of better? Better-educated, better-informed, better-born? More intelligent, more conscientious, more thoughtful—or more ruthless? This would depend upon the inclinations of the electorate. Opponents of the widening franchise feared that gullible voters would elect people worse than themselves—the kind of scoundrels who offer to hand out taxpayers' money to win votes.

The result has been a mixture of the various expectations, with some surprise ingredients thrown in. Most significant of these is the dominance of the great political parties.

It is normally said that the winning party represents a majority. Usually, however, less than a third of the total electorate has voted for the winning party. This means that electoral representation may result in a diverse two-thirds being dominated by a one-third that has agreed on something. Sometimes what the winning third agrees on is unpleasant in the extreme, as when a malevolent faction discards the traditional restraints of courtesy, law, morality, and religion and sets about exterminating a rival minority.

But this tyranny by a minority is not the usual outcome of elections in "mature" democracies. Although political parties start off representing the interests of different groups, as time goes by there is less difference between them. To win, a party needs to court the middle ground of opinion. Whoever most convincingly offers to represent the interests of the center wins the election. In other words, whoever wins, the result is a victory for the middle.

This middle ground that is so assiduously chased by both political parties may indeed be looked upon as a majority. But the majority can also act tyrannically. Lord Acton observed in 1877, "It is bad to be oppressed by a minority, but it is worse to be oppressed by a majority. ... from the absolute will of an entire people there is no appeal, no redemption, no refuge but treason."

Perhaps the most alarming feature of this "tyranny of the middle" is how governments take upon themselves, as their most important task, the maximization of economic growth. The promise of more money can be relied upon to interest most voters. Social and foreign policies are usually contentious, but not many people decline a pay rise. As a result, government doesn't let up for a moment on its promises to give us more. Nature, civilization, individuality, education, truth, beauty, honor, law, freedom,

art, religion, and justice are alike relegated or subverted to the cause of economic growth. In this way, our system of electoral representation becomes not a method of government, not a limited rule of law, but a management program for the destruction of the world.

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Perhaps the second most misused word in the English language is "freedom." Like democracy, it conveys an instant good feeling. Surely we all know what we mean by freedom, and spreading it in the world must be a good thing. But the Nazis promised *Arbeit macht frei*—work makes free—when the reality was not work but slavery, not freedom but death. And the invasion of Iraq promised freedom but brought robbery, chaos, and slaughter before returning the country to sectarian rule, heavily indebted to its "liberators."

"Freedom" derives from the Greek *eleutheria*, which was originally used to describe the sense of elation felt when drunk. It was an attribute of wildness, of man before he domesticated himself. Nowadays, we are not only domesticated, we are also civilized. The feeling of being free is identified with being let out of confinement—of prison or school or from a week at work.

But spreading freedom in the world doesn't imply emptying prisons, closing schools, abolishing jobs, nor even getting everyone drunk. So what is it we want to spread? Not freedoms that destroy freedom for others—to keep slaves or to kill. Perhaps we mean something closer to rights: "freedom from want," "freedom from pain," "freedom to reproduce." But enforcing these "freedoms" requires a huge state apparatus to monitor, assess, and appropriate resources. The result is a loss of freedom all around: even the beneficiaries find their freedom replaced by dependence on the state.



The freedoms we wish to establish politically are usually threefold: speech, association, and movement. True, these freedoms need continual defense, but they are overrated. A beggar in the street may shout his opinions, huddle with others, and stomp about. But if he wants the freedom to eat, he needs money.

Money is an enabler of freedom. It means we can eat, enjoy shelter and security, purchase enjoyments, initiate enterprise. We also buy the labor of other people and its produce, so money is double-edged: it carries with it the dark side of freedom—power.

Freedom is maximized when money is widely and equitably distributed. It is at a minimum when one person (or the state) owns everything. The laws and institutions of property express and determine the extent of a nation's ability to enjoy freedom.

An equitable diffusion of money in a society in which all adults manage to find work signifies one happy state of human affairs: we work, our work is valued, and we are able to enjoy leisure. But this ideal points to another fact: financial freedom is not all we need. Because we are sociable animals with moral instincts, our highest satisfaction comes from contributing to the welfare of others. People who care nothing about the consequences of what they do or who choose to harm others are regarded as mentally ill, or evil.

Thus the most important freedom we can have is the freedom to do what we believe is right. This liberty, or moral freedom, is what many have died for and are inspired to defend for others as if it were their own. We do not lose when others gain it. On the contrary, the world becomes a better place for all. Of course, liberty carries with it the freedom to make wrong choices, so it will not please those who are ambitious for social control—those who believe utopia is just around the corner.

Without moral freedom, our individual lives are at worst squalid, at best non-events. With it, we create worlds of culture, small and large, and the freedom to move between these worlds. Moral decision-making intricates individuals into communities. We arrive in the world with a moral instinct, but the development of a moral faculty is dependent on those around us: on our families, our wider community, on those who educate us. Communities prosper by shared bonds of trust, habit, and mutual understanding. The traditions of a community constitute an understanding of the world and of the individual's place in it.

When moral freedom is taken away by an overbearing power, there is a corresponding loss of community. The result is a widespread sense of atomization, which has been remarked upon under many names by many commentators—*anomie*, alienation, fragmentation, and the rest. And yet, in our system of electoral representation, we see the powers of government and big business growing consistently stronger. Why should this be?

The answer is that moral freedom is a burden that many people would gladly give to someone else. The poet Pushkin wrote in Russia in 1823:

To sow freedom in the wilderness  
I went out early, before the morning star.

Into furrows of enslavement,  
From hands pure and guileless,  
I flung my seed of liberty and life.  
But I was merely wasting time,  
And goodness of heart, and labor.

Fat in pasture, lands of peace,  
The call of honor wakens no one.  
Herds are deaf to the gift of freedom,  
They wait to be shorn or slaughtered:

Their heritage down the generations?

The yoke with jingles, and the whip.

The Russian people, famed for their endurance though not for their traditions of freedom, have voted back “the yoke with jingles”—if not the whip. But what of us in the West? Efforts to replace human responsibilities and the ties of community with social programs have been massively damaging. Numerous studies bear witness to how welfare programs turn conservative and moral communities into neighborhoods rent by drug addiction, gang warfare, and murder.

Voters in the West have, by and large, dumped the burden of moral freedom and devoted their lives to chasing the freedoms that money can buy. In true biblical style, this desertion of our old God in favor of Mammon has brought terrible consequences. And it is not only governments that have encouraged this desertion. Just as active in the process is another human invention, the corporation.

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Many assume that the corporation is something that exists by natural right, as an extension of simple market activity. But this is not so: the corporation only achieved its legal identity after fierce political and legal battles throughout the 19th century. Conservatives, judges, and businessmen all lined up against; in favor were newly affluent middle classes, who wanted easy money from their investments without the normal responsibilities that come with ownership. Adam Smith had already pointed out the unreasonable nature of limited liability, without which the corporation is a non-starter: “to exempt a particular set of dealers from the laws which take place in regard to all of their neighbors, merely because they might be capable of thriving if they had such an exemption, would certainly not be reasonable.” Initial battles were fought in England, in Germany, and in America. Once the corporation had won these, its success as a business instrument led most Western

countries to pass similar enabling legislation.

The corporation is able to exist because it has been granted the legal status of a human. By this fiction, a powerful monster was brought into existence that had no motive of its own. It needed to be assigned a purpose in law, otherwise it was vulnerable to predation by all associated with it: anyone could steal chunks off it, as hyenas take bites from a cow. So it was legally assigned a purpose, called an "object" in law.

The legally recognized object of a corporation is to fulfill the purposes set down by those who formed it. All those who work within the corporation are obliged to work toward this object. In the case of a commercial corporation, it is to make as much money as possible. Recent attempts to introduce other considerations have proved impossible to enforce because they introduce conflicts that cannot be resolved by the logic of argument. So, to tame the beast and curtail its excesses, masses of regulations have been introduced.

Adam Smith's old ideal, that government should be as little involved in business as possible, is now an impossibility. Negotiating the intricacies of corporate law to protect shareholders, consumers, workers, and the environment has brought governments and corporations into an interlocked and often unholy relationship. Demands made by corporations for government subsidy and help in export markets, and sometimes for back-up by state violence, covert or open, have created an extensive gray area of mixed interests. Politicians are all too keen to be close to big money, and voters are reluctant to put too much restraint on activities that increase their spending power.

One of the most extraordinary outcomes of the collusion between business and government is the huge debt contracted by government on behalf of

*Continued on page 34*

Some neoconservatives have adopted the Joseph Goebbels maxim that if you repeat a big lie often enough, it will eventually be accepted as truth. The latest big lie comes from Kenneth R. Timmerman writing for NewsMax on April 1 about the December 2007 National Intelligence Estimate that determined Iran had abandoned its nuclear weapons program.

Timmerman does not like Iran very much. He heads the Foundation for Democracy in Iran, which wants to "topple the Mullahs" and claimed alarmingly in January 2006 that Iran would test a nuclear weapon within ten weeks. Timmerman's misinformation may have come from the Iranian terrorist group Mujaheddine-e-Khalq, a neocon favorite. He is linked to the American Enterprise Institute, writes frequently for David Horowitz's FrontPage, and in 2005 authored *Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran*. (If anyone is interested in acquiring the book, it is available used for 27 cents on Amazon.)

Timmerman has claimed that Iran was behind 9/11 and that Osama bin Laden meets regularly with Iranian government officials. U.S. intelligence has linked Timmerman to Israel's Mossad, which might be the source of much that he writes.

Timmerman's latest foray into fantasy derives from an interview with one Amir Farshad Ebrahimi, an Iranian "human rights activist" who appears to be on a self-promotion tour. Ebrahimi claims that he was behind the defection of Iranian general Ali Reza Asgari in Istanbul in late 2006.

Intelligence sources agree that Asgari provided the key information that led to the NIE judgment on the suspension of Tehran's nuclear weapons program in 2003. But Timmerman, citing Ebrahimi, claims that the CIA misused the information from Asgari and "cherry picked" it to deliberately come to the wrong conclusion. Timmerman also cites an unnamed senior U.S. government official who describes the NIE as "an incredibly shoddy piece of work" and then concludes with a call for more Iranian defectors to come forward with details of "Iran's nuclear weapons programs and its support for international terrorist organizations, including al-Qaida." It is the familiar neocon story of Iran developing nuclear weapons to give to terrorists, aided and abetted by traitors at the CIA.

The only problem is that none of Timmerman's tale is true, apart from the fact that Asgari did defect. According to intelligence sources, Ebrahimi was not involved in the defection. Asgari was a recruited agent being run by the Turks and the United States jointly. Details of his defection provided by Ebrahimi and reported by Timmerman do not correspond to what actually took place. Asgari had with him detailed documentary information that confirmed that Iran had ceased its nuclear program and had not started it up again. The information was corroborated by other sources available to the intelligence community and survived a devil's advocate "red team" review as well as a final session in the White House before publication. Timmerman's version of the Asgari saga, designed to discredit the NIE, has been subject to no review and no verification. It is only a big lie.

*Philip Giraldi is a former CIA officer and fellow at the American Conservative Defense Alliance.*

# Surging to Defeat

Petraeus's strategy only postponed the inevitable.

By Andrew J. Bacevich

THE UNITED STATES today finds itself with too much war and too few warriors. We face a large and growing gap between our military commitments and our military capabilities. Something has to give.

Although violence in Iraq has decreased over the past year, attacks on coalition and Iraqi security forces continue to occur at an average rate of 500 per week. This is clearly unacceptable. The likelihood that further U.S. efforts will reduce violence to an acceptable level—however one might define that term—appears remote.

Meanwhile, our military capacity, especially our ability to keep substantial numbers of boots on the ground, is eroding. If the surge is working as some claim, then why not sustain it? Indeed, why not reinforce that success by sending another 30 or 60 or 90,000 reinforcements?

The answer to that question is self-evident: because the necessary troops don't exist. The cupboard is bare.

Furthermore, recent improvements in security are highly contingent. The Shi'ite militias, Sunni insurgents, and tribal leaders who have agreed to refrain from violence in return for arms, money, and other concessions have by no means bought into the American vision for the future of Iraq. Their interests do not coincide with our own, and we should not delude ourselves by pretending otherwise.

It is as if, in an effort to bring harmony to a fractious, dysfunctional family, we have forged marriages of convenience

with as many of that family's members as possible. Our disparate partners will abide by their vows only so long as they find them convenient.

Unfortunately, partial success in reducing the level of violence has not translated into any substantial political gains. Recall that the purpose of the surge was not to win the war in a military sense. Gen. David Petraeus never promised victory. He and any number of other senior officers have assessed the war as militarily unwinnable. On this point, the architects of the surge were quite clear: the object of the exercise was not to impose our will on the enemy but to facilitate political reconciliation among Iraqis.

A year later, signs of genuine reconciliation are few. In an interview with the *Washington Post* less than a month ago, General Petraeus said that "no one" in the U.S. government "feels that there has been sufficient progress by any means in the area of national reconciliation." While it may be nice that the Kurds have begun to display the Iraqi flag alongside their own, to depict such grudging concessions as evidence of an emerging national identity is surely to grasp at straws.

So although the level of violence has subsided somewhat, the war remains essentially stalemated. Iraq today qualifies only nominally as a sovereign nation-state. It has become a dependency of the United States, unable to manage its own affairs or to provide for the well-being of its own people. As recent events in Basra have affirmed,

the Iraqi army, a black hole into which the Pentagon has poured some \$22 billion in aid and assistance, still cannot hold its own against armed militias.

The costs to the United States of sustaining this dependency are difficult to calculate with precision, but figures such as \$3 billion per week and 30 to 40 American lives per month provide a good approximation.

What can we expect to gain in return for this investment? The Bush administration was counting on the Iraq War to demonstrate the viability of its Freedom Agenda and to affirm the efficacy of the Bush Doctrine of preventive war.

Measured in those terms, the war has long since failed. Rather than showcasing our ability to transform the Greater Middle East, Operation Iraqi Freedom has demonstrated just the opposite. Using military power as an instrument for imprinting liberal values in this part of the world has produced a failed state while fostering widespread antipathy toward the United States.

Rather than demonstrating our ability to eliminate emerging threats swiftly, decisively, and economically—Saddam Hussein's removal providing an object lesson to other tyrants tempted to contest our presence in the Middle East—the Iraq War has revealed the limits of U.S. power and called into question American competence. The Bush Doctrine hasn't worked. Saddam is long gone, but we're stuck. Rather than delivering decisive victory, preventive war has landed us in a quagmire.

The abject failure of the Freedom Agenda and the Bush Doctrine has robbed the Iraq War of any strategic rationale. The war continues in large part because of our refusal to acknowledge and confront this loss of strategic purpose.

The great theologian Reinhold Niebuhr observed, “Even the wisest statecraft cannot create social tissue. It can cut, sew, and redesign social fabric to a limited degree. But the social fabric upon which it works must be ‘given’.”

In Iraq, to the extent that any meaningful social fabric has ever existed, events have now shredded it beyond repair. Persisting in our efforts to stitch Iraq back together will exhaust our Army, divert attention from other urgent problems at home and abroad, and squander untold billions, most of which we are borrowing from foreign countries.

There are people of good will who will disagree with this assessment. They will insist that we have no choice but to persevere in Iraq—although to say that the world’s sole superpower has “no choice” in the matter suggests a remarkable failure of imagination. They will insist further that restoring the social fabric of Iraq—engineering the elusive political reconciliation that will stabilize the country—remains an imperative. Such counsel seems certain to exacerbate the problem of having too much war and too few warriors. War is the realm of uncertainty, however. There’s always some chance of catching a lucky break. Perhaps next year the Iraqis will get their act together and settle their internal differences. Perhaps next year Congress will balance the federal budget. Such developments are always possible. They are also highly unlikely.

able to claim vindication: Iraq will indeed have become a “long slog.”

For the United States to pursue this course would qualify as an epic misjudgment. Yet if our political leaders insist on the necessity of fighting this open-ended war, then they owe it to those who have already borne five years of combat to provide some relief.

Bluntly, if the country’s leaders in Washington are unable or unwilling to reduce the number of wars in which U.S. forces are engaged, then surely they ought to increase the number of warriors available to fight them.

Today, in a nation that according to President Bush is “at war,” approximately one half of 1 percent of the population is in uniform. The present course, which involves soldiers going back for their third and fourth combat tours while the rest of the country heads to the mall, will break the Army before it produces policy success. Worse, our present strategy—in which a few give their all while most give nothing—is morally indefensible.

If the war in Iraq is as important as some claim, then sustaining that war merits a commitment on the part of the American people, both to fight the war and to pay for it. If neither the American people nor their political leaders are willing to make such a commitment, then the war clearly does not qualify as genuinely important. Our loudly proclaimed determination to “support the troops” rings hollow.

The choice is one that we can no longer afford to dodge: it’s either less war or more warriors. ■

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THE PRESENT COURSE, WHICH INVOLVES **SOLDIERS GOING BACK FOR THEIR THIRD AND FOURTH COMBAT TOURS** WHILE THE REST OF THE COUNTRY HEADS TO THE MALL, **WILL BREAK THE ARMY** BEFORE IT PRODUCES POLICY SUCCESS.

To close the gap between too much war and too few warriors, we must reduce our commitments. That means ending the U.S. combat role in Iraq. It means exerting ourselves, primarily through diplomatic means, to limit the adverse consequences caused by our ill-advised crusade in Iraq. It also means devising a new strategy to address the threat posed by violent Islamic radicalism, to replace the failed strategy of the Freedom Agenda and the Bush Doctrine.

This reformulation of strategy should begin with an explicit abrogation of preventive war. It should include a candid recognition that invading and occupying an Islamic nation in the hope of transforming it qualifies as a fantasy.

When it comes to Iraq, a far more likely prospect is that if the United States insists on continuing its war there, it will get what it wants: the war will continue indefinitely. According to General Petraeus, a counterinsurgency is typically a 10 to 12-year proposition. Given that assessment, and with the “surge” now giving way to a “pause,” U.S. combat operations in Iraq could easily drag on for another five or 10 years. A large-scale U. S. military presence might be required for two or three decades.

In that event, a conflict that already ranks as the second longest in our history will claim the title of longest. Already our second most expensive war, it will become the costliest of all. On one point at least, Donald Rumsfeld will be



# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[*Stop-Loss*]

### No Exit

By Kara Hopkins

WATCHING “Stop-Loss” in a nearly empty Washington theater, I had a fantasy. On the back row sat the staff of the *Weekly Standard*. Then the senators who make windy speeches about “fighting terrorists there so we don’t have to fight them here.” Maybe a row of radio-show hosts who play “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue” from the safety of their studios. Then right in front, the president and his war cabinet, spending two hours with the pawns they keep sending back to the bloody chessboard. Three tours. Four. Five.

Of course it didn’t happen that way. Not only did D.C. skip “Stop-Loss,” the rest of the country did too. It opened in seventh place at the box office. Americans aren’t looking to be entertained by something they’d like to ignore. I counted just nine heads in the dark—three with haircuts indicating they had already seen plenty.

“Stop-Loss” is less a great movie than a worthy experience. It isn’t meant to be enjoyable. The film opens in Tikrit with a jangle of images, grainy and unfiltered, narrated in the dialect Tom Wolfe called “F--k Patois.” Boredom cuts to piety turns to joking shifts to terror.

Staff Sergeant Brandon King (Ryan Phillippe), nearing the end of his second tour, leads his men into an alley ambush. Only half walk out. Stamped on the

young Texan’s brain: his friend’s bloodied face, a grenade rolling across the floor, bullet holes in a child’s chest. The images follow him home.

Director Kimberly Peirce found inspiration in the hand-held videos shot by her brother’s friends while he served in Iraq. The messiness suits her, and she doesn’t press hard after a point. Apart from a few soapbox moments, “Stop-Loss” doesn’t sermonize about the morality of the Iraq War. The human wreckage suffices.

King’s unit returns to Texas, but Peirce doesn’t allow the tension to dissipate. Her young men are still tight-wound and combat-ready. They endure their parade, kiss their girls, then embark on a full tour of the Little Shop of Horrors that is post-traumatic stress disorder. Binge drinking? Check. Random rage? On full display. Pulling guns on strangers? Impotence? Hallucinations? Flashbacks? Abuse? All present. When a troubled soldier walks over a hill, it’s a safe bet that he won’t be back. Suicide was the only symptom not yet catalogued.

This dramatic compression diminishes the gravity of the situation—a pit-fall of setting reality to cinematic pace. Every returning vet isn’t tormented by a legion of demons. But if even a small percentage of the 650,000 soldiers who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan bear psychic scars, theirs is indeed a “long war.”

King seems able to cope. He survived and is getting out. Until he isn’t. As he tries to turn in his gear, King learns that he, like 81,000 other American soldiers, has been stop-lossed on the president’s order. Fine print rules. He will be returning to Iraq.

Up to that point, the young sergeant has been poster-boy bland—square-jawed and humorless. Of course he played high-school football and has a gritty mom and stoic dad. He does the hometown proud and doesn’t speak out of turn. But this asks too much.

Borrowing his best friend’s Jeep and fiancée, the winsome Michelle (Abbie Cornish), King takes off on a cross-country odyssey to see a senator in Washington who will surely set things right. The earnestness endears. “Why don’t you write a letter to the editor while you’re at it?” another AWOL soldier quips. King ends up with an old liberal fixer who slides a Canadian passport across the table.

But he’s too good a soldier to walk away without a fight. The values that came with the uniform declare war on each other: duty and humanity, brutality and decency. “You know that box in your head where you put all the bad s--t you can’t deal with?” he confesses. “Well, mine is full.”

His best friend re-enlists. “This is something I can be proud of,” he says, thumping the medals on his chest. “Did you think I’d end up selling cars? This is safety.” Another man from King’s unit—blinded, burned, missing an arm and a leg as a result of the Tikrit ambush—speculates that if he could go back and be killed in action, his family would get green cards. Another admits, “I miss blowing s--t up.” There is no easy ethic here.

But in the end there’s an obvious course for Sergeant King. He does the right thing—and it feels wrong. ■

Rated R for violence and profanity.

[Steve Sailer will return next issue.]

## BOOKS

[*The Strange Death of Republican America: Chronicles of a Collapsing Party*, Sidney Blumenthal, Union Square Press, 352 pages]

# Premature Burial

By Tom Piatak

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL'S latest collection of essays, *The Strange Death of Republican America: Chronicles of a Collapsing Party*, certainly has passages of wit and insight. Blumenthal generally succeeds in justifying his contempt for the Bush administration and the neoconservatives. Unfortunately, his disdain does not stop there; he also reveals a dislike for all varieties of conservatism and an alienation from the rather large part of America that does not share his leftism. This estrangement, shared by many in the Democratic Party elite, suggests that Blumenthal's conclusion—that Bush and the neocons have destroyed the Republican Party—is premature.

Blumenthal presents the Bush administration as an unhealthy mix of sycophantic incompetents, such as Condoleezza Rice and Alberto Gonzales (“cipher, enabler, and useful idiot”), and neocon fanatics, such as Douglas Feith and Paul Wolfowitz. He finds the right anecdotes to illustrate both obsequiousness and ideological extremism, quoting, for example, chief of staff Josh Bolten saying to Bush every morning, “Thank you for the privilege of serving today.” Wolfowitz’s fanaticism is well shown by his prediction about the “liberation of Iraq”: “when that regime is removed we will find one of the most talented populations in the Arab world, perhaps complaining that it took us so long to get there. Perhaps a little

unfriendly to the French for making us take so long to get there. But basically welcoming us as liberators. ...There’s not going to be the hostility. ...There simply won’t be.”

Blumenthal understands the source of the neoconservatives’ ideology, describing them as “Leninist-like ideologues” and noting, “neoconservatism had its origins as a strain of Trotskyism.” He rightly pegs Dick Cheney as a fervent neocon and a driving force of the Bush administration’s agenda: “Cheney’s involvement with neoconservatism has been continuous for more than three decades.” Furthermore, Blumenthal accurately identifies the centrality of Israel to the neocon calculus: “The neocon logic in favor of the Iraq war was that the road to Jerusalem led through Baghdad.” And he is on target in his assertion that “the terrorists are a real but not existential threat, that they should not be misconstrued as the central problem in our foreign policy, and that their presence can be coped with through confidence, fortitude, and intelligence.”

Yet this book is also tedious—do we really need half a dozen essays on Valerie Plame?—and marred by unrelenting partisanship. The author is exercised over Bush’s commutation of Libby’s sentence, but was that action less justified than Bill Clinton’s full pardon of Marc Rich? Indeed, Blumenthal still carries a torch for the Clintons that the rest of the liberal media, distracted by the glow of Obamamania, has dropped. Our foolish intervention in the Balkans is described as “an example of U.S. leadership,” Bob Woodward is criticized for his “envious contempt for Bill Clinton (and Al Gore),” Bush’s problems stem from his determination “to do everything opposite from what Bill Clinton had done,” and one repentant Bush staffer is portrayed as seeking absolution by performing the only penance that can blot out his Republican sins, “preparing to disappear for the next ten years in Africa for the HIV/AIDS initiative of the Clinton Foundation.”

Blumenthal even describes the 2008 election as the most important since

1860, with one vision of the presidency, “whose founding father was George Washington,” clashing with another, “whose founding father was Richard Nixon.” One almost expects to read how Bill Clinton could not lie about chopping down the cherry tree, and how Hillary—under constant sniper fire—crossed the Delaware.

Hillary’s tall tale about her adventures in Bosnia, and Obama’s 20-year association with Reverend “God Damn America” also suggest another weakness of Blumenthal’s book: the Republican Party may not be dead after all. Even though Bush has been a disastrous president and McCain is stubbornly attached to many of Bush’s worst policies, such as a desire to spread democracy by force, a wish to erase the border with Mexico, and an unalterable commitment to globalism and free trade, he is doing rather well in the polls. A recent Rasmussen survey showed McCain topping Clinton 51 percent to 43 percent and beating Obama 51 percent to 43 percent.

It is, of course, possible, even likely, that the Democrats will win the victory that they think eight years of Bush should give them. But any coalition that can survive the Bush presidency is strong, not weak. And if McCain is elected, it will be clear that the Republican Party is alive, despite Blumenthal’s obituary.

The book also suggests, perhaps inadvertently, why the coalition assembled by Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan might pass its latest test. The Republicans have been successful for many years because they have convinced most Americans that, in important ways, the GOP is the more American of the two major parties. An engineer friend of mine, who has broad paleoconservative sympathies and no love for Bush, captured this view perfectly in 2004 when he told me that the Kerry-Edwards slogan of “For a Stronger America” should really have been “For a Stranger America.” And Republicans have had no better helpers in creating this image than Democrats, whose distance from the nation’s mainstream was brought

home again this year by Michelle Obama's inability to feel pride in America from the beginning of her adult life until her husband started winning Democratic primaries.

Blumenthal expresses contempt for such harmless expressions of Americana as Norman Rockwell and *The Saturday Evening Post*, laments that Republican political power "has protected philistinism from the ravages of cosmopolitanism," mocks Dennis Hastert for "having coached high school wrestling in small-town Illinois," expresses horror that some Bush appointees have attended evangelical colleges and recite Bible verses on the job, and scorns the "swamps of Dixie" while making very clear his joy that white Southerners are no longer a major force in the Democratic Party.

Blumenthal displays little understanding of the forces he disdains, bizarrely suggesting that the Bush administration somehow influenced the Vatican so that "conservatives using the abortion issue

course, this is more or less the same group described by John Jay, in *Federalist* #2, as a "band of brethren" and "descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, and professing the same religion." (Blumenthal's castigation of the GOP for its "identity politics" is wholly without irony, even though Democratic primary voters have divided largely along the lines of race and sex in the contest between Hillary and Obama.) Given the attitudes of Blumenthal and other leading Democrats, is it any wonder that millions of "white male semirural fundamentalist Protestant" voters have firmly cast their lot with the GOP, despite the Democratic background and modest economic circumstances of many such voters?

*The Strange Death of Republican America* is also a reminder of the impracticability of any alliance between the non-Bushite Right and the Left. It is true that Blumenthal is relentless in his criticism of Bush and the neocons and

In other words, Blumenthal believes conservatives are mentally ill. The last time such Marxist quackery was put into practice was in the USSR, when dissidents were locked up in mental wards.

Not only does Blumenthal disagree with conservative positions, he is unwilling to concede that a rational person could ever embrace them. He likens opponents of mass immigration to the Klux Klan, yet curiously fails to acknowledge Bush's zeal for open borders. He writes, "American politics has been racked by cycles of nativism, appearing in periods of conservative reaction." So manifestly correct are leftist views that Blumenthal feels taxpayers should always subsidize them. He criticizes Rudy Giuliani for opposing the display of a Virgin Mary constructed of elephant dung in a public museum and claims that opposition to federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research is motivated, in the words of John Danforth, by a desire to "punish people who believe that it is their religious duty to use science to heal the sick." One wonders how Blumenthal and Danforth would describe Japanese scientist Shinya Yamanaka, who devised a way to give ordinary skin cells the same protean abilities as embryonic stem cells after he looked at an embryo and "suddenly realized there was such a small difference between it and my daughters. I thought, we can't keep destroying embryos for our research. There must be another way."

There must also be another way out of the morass of contemporary American politics, where voters are offered the unappealing choice this fall between a neocon-dominated GOP and a Democratic Party in thrall to the social radicalism of the '60s. We can start by reminding the too few Americans who know, and the too many who don't, that the Bush administration has long been criticized from the Right. Trying to construct an alliance between disenchanting conservatives and leftists who think as Blumenthal does will not work. ■

*Tom Piatak writes from Cleveland, Ohio.*

# GIVEN THE ATTITUDES OF BLUMENTHAL AND OTHER LEADING DEMOCRATS, IS IT ANY WONDER THAT MILLIONS OF "WHITE MALE SEMIRURAL FUNDAMENTALIST PROTESTANT" VOTERS HAVE FIRMLY CAST THEIR LOT WITH THE GOP?

were raised to the pulpit while progressive minded bishops concerned with a broader agenda were isolated." And he suggests that Bush's use of the phrase "just a comma" in a speech may just be a signifier to his religious right base. 'Never put a period where God has put a comma' is a common admonition among the faithful." Blumenthal does not recognize that the Christians who make most use of this phrase are not right-wing evangelicals but the ultra-liberal United Church of Christ, which wants members to believe that "God is still speaking" in ways that are consistent with modern leftism, even if they are inconsistent with the Bible.

Blumenthal dismisses the Republican Party as being "in the grip of an intolerant identity politics—white male semirural fundamentalist Protestant." Of

often employs arguments first used by paleos. But the enemy of my enemy is not always my friend. Blumenthal dislikes conservatives of all persuasions. He describes Gerald Ford as "the last regular Republican to serve as president," lovingly quotes Ford's disdain for Reagan, and dismisses Hillsdale College as "a citadel of conservative crankdom." He even cites—with a straight face—the Frankfurt School's Theodore Adorno and his *Authoritarian Personality* and quotes a Canadian professor's conclusion that 20 to 25 percent of Americans are susceptible to "right-wing authoritarianism" because they are "socially isolated and insular, fearful of people different from themselves ... prone to a constant sense of besiegement and panic, and punitive and self-righteous."

[*Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food*, Gene Baur, Touchstone, 304 pages]

## The Conscience of a Carnivore

By Rod Dreher

THE CONCEPT of animal rights and welfare doesn't come easy to conservatives. The term brings to mind PETA zealots throwing paint on ladies in fur coats, or—this really happened to my wife and me—angry crones screaming at parents pushing a stroller, calling them “breeders” who are destroying the animals’ planet. Most conservatives see a concern about animal welfare as an eccentric hobby at best, and at worst a form of misanthropic psychosis.

The excesses of pro-animal crusaders make it far too easy for conservatives to ignore evidence that in our current age the relationship humans have to animals—to be precise, the animals we raise for our food—is morally disordered and even something close to—dare I say it?—evil. That's a strong judgment, but it is difficult to reach any other conclusion after scrutinizing the conditions under which food animals are raised in vast factory farms. The same system of mass depersonalization and subsequent mass cruelty that the Leviathan state wrought against individuals in the 20th century, against which conservatives rightly fought, has been reproduced on factory farms in contemporary America. And conservatives for the most part see no problem with this.

To be sure, it's ridiculous and offensive to compare the gulag of Stalin to the chicken-farm archipelago of Tyson Foods, and the very suggestion is what makes many morally serious conservatives ignore what animal-rights activists have to say. But there are parallels. Thoughtful carnivores—and I am an enthusiastic meat-eater—need not swear off animal flesh altogether to rec-

ognize that there is something very wrong with the way we exercise stewardship over farm animals. This is an integral part of the spiritual sickness of our age—a disease that conservatism ought to be fighting.

The book to read is *Dominion*, conservative writer Matthew Scully's trenchant 2002 meditation on the prudent and moral exercise of our power over animals. Scully's friend Gene Baur is no conservative, and he doesn't have Scully's gift for moral philosophizing. But his *Farm Sanctuary: Changing Hearts and Minds About Animals and Food* is nevertheless a powerful witness to the wickedness of the American way of growing meat—a testimony that is all the more persuasive because Baur is not a hysteric. Somehow, confronting what a man of his convictions and sensibilities cannot regard as anything but a moral catastrophe, he has retained his faith in the humanity of others and hope in their ability to reason. No doubt it's because Baur is not by nature or belief a utopian. “I have always thought it's better to do something positive and practical,” he writes, “and not to make the perfect an enemy of progress.”

Baur is a middle-aged activist and the co-founder of Farm Sanctuary, a refuge (two of them, actually) for farm animals rescued as “downers” from discard piles at stockyards or recovered from other abusive conditions. Baur and his volunteers nurse the creatures back to health and let them live out their natural lives in a traditional farming environment—except the animals are not eaten by their caretakers nor are their milk or eggs taken. The Farm Sanctuary folks are vegans, meaning they don't eat meat or dairy products.

Admittedly, *Farm Sanctuary* initially set my teeth on edge. Some people are born animal lovers who, depending on your point of view, either discern noble qualities in animals or impose human traits upon them. And then there are vinegary cretins like me. Baur's interstitial personality profiles of individual rescued animals (Hilda, Maya, Cinci Freedom, and the huggable lot) are heartfelt

and true to his philosophy of elevating creaturely dignity, but they're pretty cloying all the same.

You would expect the entire book to be like this, given its author's background. Mercifully, no. Baur believes the world would be a better place if no one ate meat or dairy products, but in this book, at least, he's not a proselytizer on that point. Nor does his wincingly potent case for reform rely on sentimentalizing or anthropomorphizing livestock, which makes *Farm Sanctuary* harder to ignore.

What Baur does well is discuss in everyday language the conditions in which most of the meat Americans eat is produced in the industrial farm system. It is a horror show, the depravity of which requires no artificially vivid prose to elucidate. Baur understands that he doesn't need the activist's cheap rhetorical theatrics to make his point. His polemic has such cumulative force because he deftly piles up facts, personal observations, and arguments without engaging in histrionic deck-stacking.

By now, the stories he tells aren't new, at least not to readers of the recent best-sellers *Fast-Food Nation* and *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, which have deconstructed American eating habits in stomach-turning detail. *Farm Sanctuary* takes us back to the confinement crates, the stockyards, the slaughterhouses, and so on, exploring the revolting particulars of contemporary animal husbandry. It is hard to read this stuff without flinching or worse, not simply because one is tenderhearted about animals.

Killing a living creature and preparing it for the table is not and never can be a clean, easy, and carefree act. What's so troubling about factory farming is how the system thoroughly instrumentalizes animal life, treating animals not as creatures that have an inherent nature, the limits of which we are bound to respect, but rather as abstractions, units of production that can be infinitely manipulated to suit man's desires. In his 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, Pope



John Paul II condemned as “anthropological error” the common modern assumption that human beings are free to exploit the natural world without respect to its “God-given” purpose.

Factory farming subjects cows, pigs, and the like to conditions that are perverse in the sense that they radically disfigure the animals’ nature. And when the suffering creatures go mad or become ill as a result, farmers often deform them (e.g., burning off chickens’ beaks) or jack them up with antibiotics to mask the effects of their mistreatment. What can we call a system that condemns animals raised for our nourishment to such a pitiless, unnatural existence, if not evil?

Accounts such as Baur’s unavoidably raise the question of how participation in the system deforms our own moral nature. What does it do to our collective character to ignore, dismiss or remain indifferent to the torture of factory farming because our appetite and convenience depends on keeping the system going? On the other hand, though, what about the slaughterhouse workers (many of them poor immigrants) and the farmers who, given the way the industry is structured, have little choice but to conform if they want to support their families? It’s a credit to Baur that he sees these folks not as villains but as victims of agribusiness interests and complicit politicians.

Ultimately, in a market culture, the responsibility lies with consumers. Cutting through the philosophical cant that pro-choicers deploy to mask selfish motives, Mother Teresa once said, “It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish.” One does not have to buy into Peter Singer’s absurd and dangerous notion that animal life is morally equivalent to human life to recognize the same bad-faith dynamic in the factory farming discussion. Many of us who are sticklers for virtue ethics in other areas become consequentialists around the dinner table.

What Baur and those like him want is hardly radical. In fact, it’s perfectly sane, even modest: a return to a morally

responsible standard of animal husbandry. “The animal protection cause simply asks that animals not be treated like things but respected as creatures with inherent rights,” he writes. “It also maintains that we have an ethical responsibility not to abuse them.”

What does this mean in a society that’s not about to give up meat anytime soon? Baur praises the tiny but growing number of small-acreage farmers who raise their livestock in ways more attuned to the animals’ particular nature. Cows allowed to roam and graze on pastures, chickens ranging in actual yards—that sort of thing. Despite government regulations favoring mass farming, the rise of ethical and health consciousness has spawned a cottage industry of localist family farmers. They are supported by carnivorous consumers who want no part of the factory-farm system, and who are willing to pay higher prices to escape it.

Alas, these consumers represent only a fly on the hind quarters of the gargantuan American meat market. Despite the slew of books, movies, and newspaper articles about factory farming, and well-publicized videos like the recent one showing slaughterhouse workers illegally driving sick downer cows into the food chain, most Americans remain unfazed. To modify an Upton Sinclair quote cited by Baur, it is difficult to get a man to understand something when his dinner depends on his not understanding it.

Wendell Berry has identified “the addict’s excuse”: the belief that “we cannot change because we are dependent on what is wrong.” Whether he realizes it or not, Gene Baur, writing from the agricultural front lines, effectively advances a traditionalist conservative case for applying natural law and localism to the American farm, which has been mutated beyond recognition by modernity and the appetites of mass society. ■

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*[Vishnu’s Crowded Temple: India Since the Great Rebellion, Maria Misra, Yale University Press, 449 pages]*

## All the Raj

By Septimus Waugh

SOMETIMES LITERATURE is great because what it communicates belies the creator’s conscious intention. *Kim*, written by Rudyard Kipling to laud the superiority of British rationalism and organization over Indian mysticism, so lost its way in the lyrical description of Kim’s travels with the lama from Tibet, that it became the first beatnik novel, and a work of propaganda was transformed into a work of art.

Although it would be presumptuous to describe *Vishnu’s Crowded Temple* as literature, this dense and well-researched overview of Indian history since the mutiny of 1857 is lifted by the copious use of fascinating anecdote. These stories, while perfectly true, have the same impact on the reader as allegory. The mind is led along self-reflective and analytical paths into consideration not merely of India in the 19th and 20th centuries but also of the general predicament at the start of the third millennium.

Maria Misra’s account of India during this period resonates with the history of the West. Just as Kipling paid lip service to the superiority of British imperialism, and then went on to undermine it in the telling of his tale, so Misra makes a polite, if trite, salute to Indian nationalist sensibility in her introduction: “The subcontinent is too vast and too ancient and the British presence too brief and microscopic for them to be seen as its leading players.” She then, however, proceeds to tell the story of a connection between Britain and India which is not microscopic at all but pervasive and persistent.

It is not a flattering portrait of the British Raj that she paints. Although she does not see it as consciously malevolent, she describes a regime that was inconsistent, penny-pinching, and often arrogantly

obtuse about the needs of its subjects. At one moment it would be trying to impose utilitarian rationalist values without any heed to the offense caused to the religious feelings of the native population; at the next, it would be enshrining Brahmanical superiority in a caste system that the British imagined was a reflection of their own hierarchies of class.

In fact, there was no such unified system throughout India, where local differences, particularly in the south, allowed low-caste sections of the population to dominate socially and even control temple worship. In their quest to create from the Brahman *varna* (order of the caste system) an aristocracy modeled on that of Britain, enthusiastic scientists ludicrously sought to establish a racial type for Brahmans by traveling round the country measuring the lengths of noses and the width of nostrils. On one side of an arbitrarily prescribed ratio the population would be described as Aryans and therefore Brahmanical; on the other side, they were simply natives.

In contrast to the Nazis, however, the British did not allow this kind of racial stereotyping to dominate their attitudes; rather, they found their friends where they could. At one point it might be the Brahman, at another it might be the Muslim population that was promoted, depending on who was the least trouble to deal with at any particular time. The empire was driven by exigency rather than ideology. Attempts at grand planning repeatedly failed, due to lack of money and to the strength of local opposition.

Nevertheless, the British legacy was considerable. The formation of a single administrative unit for the whole of India created the precursor for the nation that has evolved, while the resultant jostling for influence between the different religious groups opened the fissure that made partition inevitable in the last days of the Raj. Misra lays the blame for the birth of what she describes as “communitarian” politics in India on the British predilection for categorizing people by religion. When religious identity became inseparable from political identity for

Indians themselves, the seeds were sown that would lead to the violence that accompanied the partition of India in 1947 and the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in the 1990s.

In the 1850s, the British actually banned Hindus from worshipping in the Babri mosque, which they had informally shared with Muslims for centuries. This was a misguided attempt to restore order after an inter-communitarian squabble about a nearby Hindu temple supposedly built over a mosque. Denial bred desire, and the Babri mosque began to assume great importance to Hindus as the legendary birthplace of Ram. The lid blew off the pressure cooker after a hugely popular television series about the Ramayana in the 1980s. The subsequent popularity of Ram was exploited by Hindu nationalists who made the mosque an issue to embarrass the ruling secular Congress government that was set on improving relations with Pakistan. Thus a process began which ended with Hindu nationalist “goons” carrying out pogroms against Muslims throughout the Punjab and to the destruction of the Babri Mosque.

On a more positive note, Misra reveals, among the excellent potted biographies and witty pen portraits dotted throughout the book, that the main architects of India’s struggle for independence, Gandhi, Jinnah, and Nehru, were all educated at Oxford and Cambridge, either in law or the sciences. Gandhi’s campaign to promote the spinning wheel, which seems so uniquely Gandhian, was, in fact, influenced by his admiration for William Morris’s writings in praise of cottage industries. Misra’s final chapter, on Nehru’s premiership of India, is entitled “The Last Viceroy,” and describes how Nehru carried out similar policies to the Raj, fuelled by an inherited conviction that “India was defined by its diversity.” His English tutor had left him with a passion for science and a determination to drag India into the space age. “A part of me, a fairly important part, has been made by England,” he confessed to the Cambridge Union 30 years after he had left it.

Of course, there is much more to the history of India in the last 150 years. There is the story of the emergence of the untouchables and lower castes into the political and economic arenas, partly nursed by the liberal policies of Congress, partly driven forward by individual heroes whose names have barely been heard of in the West. One such was Ramaswami Naiker. His “Self Respect Movement” initiated the temple storming campaign by the Untouchables in the 1930s. Typically, Mahatma Gandhi managed to negotiate a peaceful compromise that allowed dual use of the temples for both Untouchables and Brahmans; the Brahmans, however, were allowed to cleanse and purify them, if they so desired, after use by the Untouchables.

There is also Laloo Prasad Yadav, “a tribal” who, on the back of positive discrimination policies of Congress, and through his own charisma, managed to be elected to the chief ministership of Bihar in the 1990s. Laloo refused to live in the chief minister’s mansion in Patna preferring his brother-in-law’s hovel. He endeared himself to the people by giving out chocolates and pensions and helicopter rides on a whim. Finally, after being put in charge of the Indian railways, he managed to turn them into a dramatic success story.

Furthermore, Misra elucidates the complicated workings of Indian democracy, the world’s largest, as Indians will proudly proclaim to all who are prepared to listen. She takes a more skeptical view than liberal ideologues like Amartya Sen, who, in his book *The Argumentative Indian*, traces the lively spirit of open debate that is to be found everywhere in India back to a dispute about the existence of God in the Ramayana. Misra does not deny that democracy in India functions through open and free debate; she does show, however, that efficient social and economic administration is frequently compromised by the need to indulge different interest groups, whether defined by caste, tribe, religion, or geography.

The complexity of the groupings in India frequently leads to surprise

alliances between parties representing apparently opposite and irreconcilable ends of the political spectrum. Politicians have been known to switch party while in office, and corruption is ever present. While open to change, India has difficulty implementing it because of the process of negotiation needed between so many different interest groups.

In the end, though, the India that this book reveals is a place that is very familiar to the Western mind, in contradistinction to the two other Asian giants, China and Russia. There has been a two-way traffic of ideas between India and the West, with economic liberalism and democracy traveling eastward, and Gandhian passive resistance winging back westward.

It would have been possible to write a very dark history of India over the last 150 years. Such an account might have concentrated the prolonged and savage response of the British to the Indian Rebellion of 1857, or their heartless famine management that led to mass starvation, or the outlandish racism that informed the massacre of peaceful protesters at Amritsar by forces under General Dyer. There was also the incompetent management of Partition, by both British and Indian politicians, which led to killing on a massive scale. No less horrifying are the pogroms, mainly by Hindus on Muslims, which have sporadically occurred in the history of Bihar and the Punjab.

Misra does not duck these issues. They are described and analyzed, but they fit into a much bigger picture, which is overall tentatively hopeful. Moreover, there are lessons in this book for every nation. Americans will discern echoes of their mistakes in Iraq in the tribulations of the British Raj. Europeans will see the workings of their own Union reflected in the wheeler-dealing nature of the Indian democracy.

Although *Vishnu's Crowded Temple* is an academic book based on extensive research, Maria Misra has cleverly aimed it at a wider readership. The bibliography is confined to the end of the book, while quotations, instead of being allocated

numbers throughout the text, are sourced after the bibliography for each chapter. This might make it marginally more cumbersome for the student to read as a set text, yet it allows the book to flow.

Nor does Misra confine herself to India's political and economic development. There are very interesting passages on the role that cricket played in the empire, and on the contribution of Bollywood movies to modern India, though in such an argumentative coun-

try even sport and popular cinema take on political import. Altogether, the book is an enlightening and witty portrait of a lively democracy, peopled with fascinating characters. There could be no better introduction for anyone wishing to find out about modern India. ■

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## Democracy

*Continued from page 25*

American taxpayers. Most of the capital created by this debt has gone abroad and become part of the floating world of offshore money, which moves here and there, not benefiting the taxpayer who works long hours to pay the interest. Thus American taxpayers have ended up with the same burden that lies heavily on Third World countries: a huge debt, contracted by an oligarchic government that enserfs them to outsiders.

The "he who must be read" of corporate history is Alfred Chandler. His most celebrated observation is that corporations succeed because they have replaced Adam Smith's "invisible hand" of Providence with the visible hand of management. Much of the grotesqueness of the modern world is contained in this substitution. Smith's invisible hand was a mechanism whereby the greed and self-interest of the merchant profited the general welfare in a free-market society. An example of its continued existence would be the benefits of Bill Gates's monopolism to the consumer, who can use almost any computer worldwide with ease. Conversely, the visible hand of management extracts maximum profit for a group of people—shareholders—who neither work for their money nor bear financial or moral responsibility for the results of their actions.

The important thing about a corporation is that moral freedom in the workplace is destroyed. Human moral

inclinations such as making a good product, telling the truth, restraint, even "preferring the support of domestic to foreign industry," as Smith wrote, are suppressed to satisfy the requirement of making as much money as possible. As a result, most of us are faced with a choice: either forget about the moral consequences of our work and serve a great corporate power or live outside the system and in poverty.

Of course, the world of business has always had its scoundrels, but with the dominance of corporations we might say that roguery has been globalized, made official and compulsory.

The corporate world is a victory of collective power over the individual, supported in law. Looking for ideas in opposition to this power, there is no point in turning to the Left, which would put an even greater collective power in the control of an even more heartless creature, the State. Nor can we look to today's neoconservatives, who bow to the corporate beast more thoroughly than they worship the Book of Revelation. To find a way forward, we need to retrieve and develop ideas from the conservative revolutionism of the Founding Fathers, who were aware that true democracy and freedom are hard to achieve, even harder to safeguard, and that preserving them from the normal abuses of power as well as from "the impostures of pretended patriotism" would be a task for the generations. ■

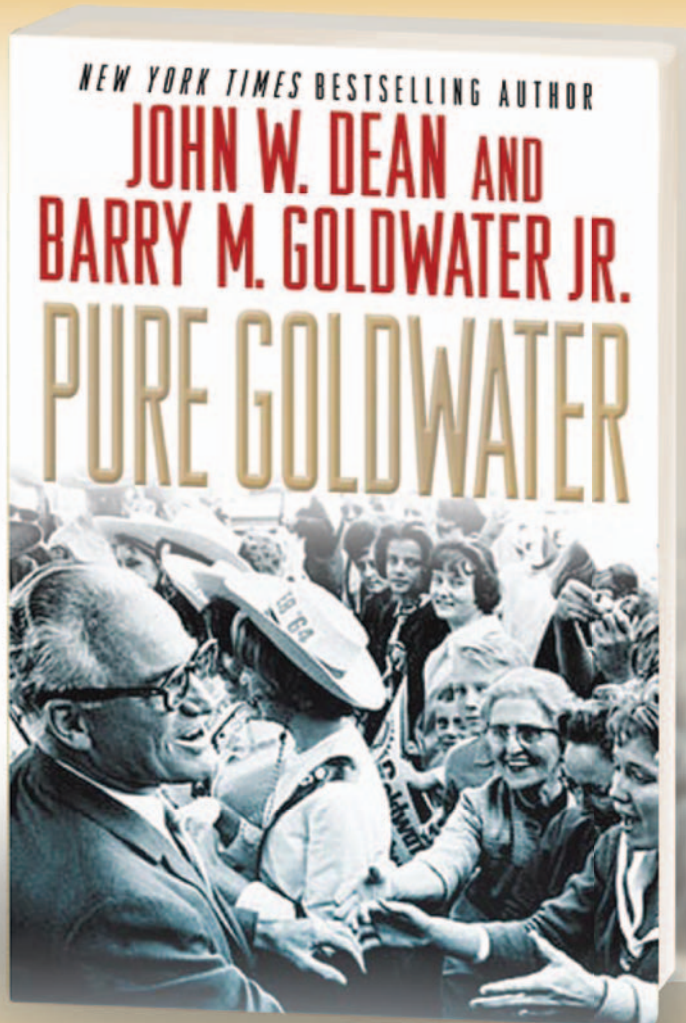
*Ivo Mosley is author of Democracy, Fascism and the New World Order.*



# "IN YOUR HEART, YOU KNOW HE'S

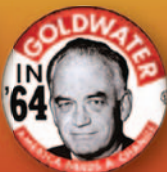


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